

SCHOOL PROJECTS PROMOTING

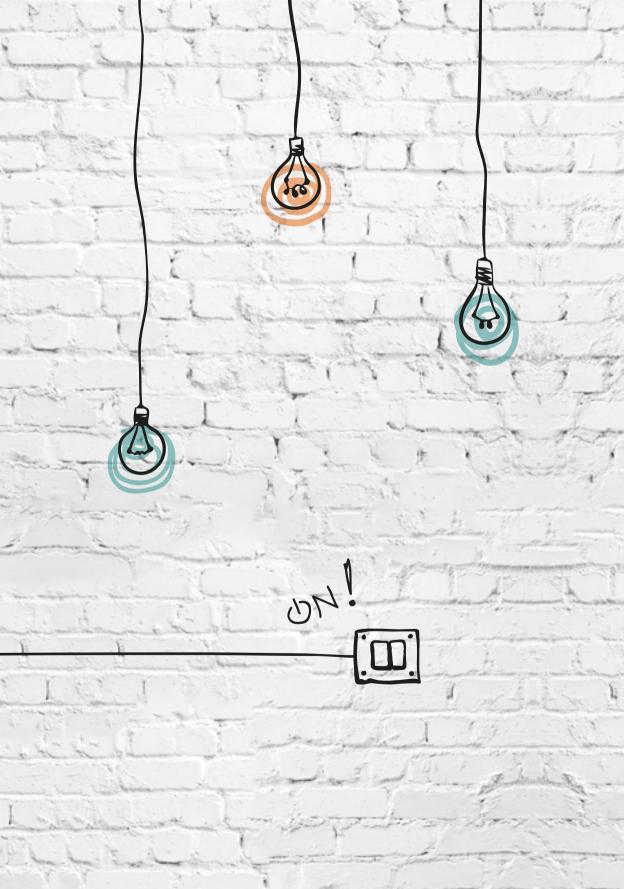
DIVERSITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE

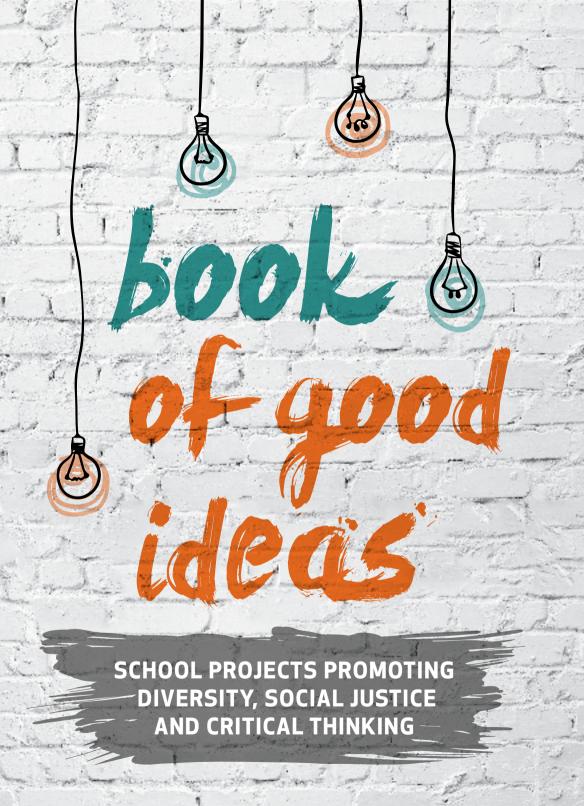
AND CRITICAL THINKING











Impressym

TITLE

Book of Good Ideas - school projects promoting diversity, social justice and critical thinking

PUBLISHER

Forum for Freedom in Education Đorđićeva 8, 10 000 Zagreb Croatia

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GRAPHIC DESIGN: ACT Printlab d.o.o.

Zagreb, Croatia, 2018.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



This publication is co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ Programme. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Forum for Freedom in Education and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

This project is co-funded by the Office for cooperation with NGOs of the Government of Republic of Croatia. The sole responsibility for the views expressed in this publication lies with the Forum for Freedom in Education.



This project is co-funded by the City of Zagreb. The sole responsibility for the views expressed in this publication lies with the Forum for Freedom in Education.



Acknowledgements

PROJECT PARTNERS:

- Think Global, United Kingdom
- Youth Centre of Dravinja Valley, Slovenia
- Centre for Creative Development "Danilo Dolci", Italy
- · Forum for Freedom in Education, Croatia (lead partner)

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ASSOCIATED PARTNER

• Network of Education Policy Centres

Schools, teachers and students from Italy, Slovenia, United Kingdom and Croatia who participated in the Start the Change project.



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Introduction

Welcome to the Book of Good Ideas!

This Book was created with the purpose of having great work by young people, schools and teachers in one place. It contains good practice examples of school projects that promote the values of diversity, social justice and critical thinking among students and teachers.

The Book of Good Ideas serves as a hub of inspirational ideas and activities to support young people to develop empathy, critical thinking skills and confidence to create positive change in their own communities and beyond.

The publication was created within the project "Start the Change - embracing differences through intercultural education and volunteering", created and manufactured in the creative workshop of the civil society organization Forum for Freedom in Education from Croatia during 2017 and 2018. Beside Croatia, the project was implemented in Italy (Sicily), Slovenia and United Kingdom by the partner organizations: Centre for Creative Development "Danilo Dolci", Youth Centre of Dravinja Valley and Think Global.

Within this project, the partner organizations worked with 40 schools over a 2 year period through different activities such as training, workshops, networking, and exchange of ideas with both teachers and students. In the second year of the project, the students and teachers of the participating schools initiated and implemented different school projects. These ranged from projects focussed within the school to those impacting their local community- but all had one overarching focus: to promote respect, mutual acceptance and the celebration of similarities and differences in their schools and local communities. These projects also enabled young people to think critically about the world around them and realise that they can stand for social justice in their classrooms, schools and local communities.

We hope you will enjoy reading these inspiring stories from teachers and students. Each school shared their own stories in this book and, how they 'started the change' and we hope you will be inspired to join our 'changemakers community'.

Editors

Starting the change in ITALY

The school projects in Italy were supported by the partner organization Centre for Creative Development Danilo Dolci, the organization based in Palermo, Sicily.

The first step in encouraging students to reflect on issues they consider important, both in and out of their schools, was implementing in small focus groups in which their voice and perspectives were collected by the partner organization. The students raised issues that were already recognized by the design of this project – they are aware of issues around them and they have a lot of ideas on how they can tackle them, give their say and contribute in solving them.

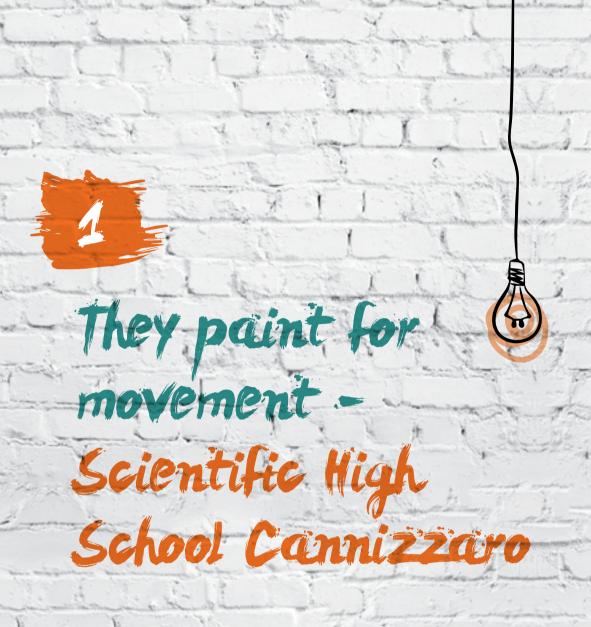
Some students decided to initiate discussions about the topics important to them through art, while others came up with other creative ways on how to meet more often and work together on raising awareness about topics like identity, stereotypes, conflict resolution, accepting differences, and others. Some students decided to take the matter into their hands and started solving the problems related to the maintenance of their schools and school environments. They also reached their local communities and send the clear message that together they can start the positive changes they want to see in their communities.

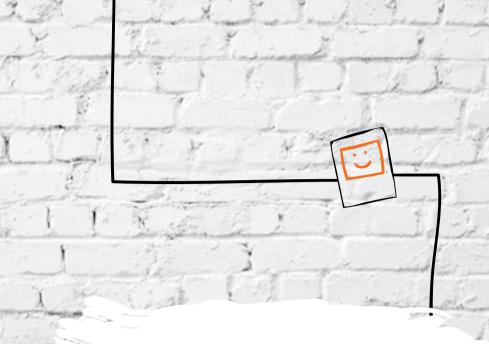
Seven schools from Palermo and vicinity of Palermo participated in Start the Change project:

Scientific High School Cannizzaro, Scientific High School Ernesto Basile, Artistic High School Almeyda – Crispi, Classical High School Vittorio Emanuele II, I.C. Cassarà – Guida, I.I.S. Orso Mario Corbino, Lower Secondary School Mattarella.

These schools are different in terms of the educational attainment level, age and number of students and they are located in different parts of Palermo region which all presents the unique contexts in which they operate, but common to all of them was desire to make a difference and give their contribution to the world they would like to live in.







Scientific High School Cannizzaro is located in a neighbourhood of Palermo that is known as a residential area for families with a medium to high social class. In recent years, there has been a constant increase in the number of students with non-Italian citizenship or in some case children of immigrants. So it's not surprising that the students have recognized the topic of diversity as one they think is important to speak about. Students and teachers were discussing how to make a creative contribution to the project *Start the Change* but also to create something that will permanently send a positive message to students in school, after the completion of project.



Dipin-Go

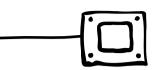
The local project activities consisted of a combination of different kinds of activities. both on a thinking and brainstorm level, as well as on an artistic level, in the ideas, designing and realization of a mural at school. During the first meetings between students and teachers, students were asked to reflect on topics such as inclusion, diversity and their own ideas on what was happening in the world around them and how they would improve it. These reflections were shared and discussed within the group. The students have reflected a lot on what diversity and prejudices mean and came to the conclusion that the "other" is not different but rather an enrichment. At first, the students made sketches for different designs and through voting, one idea was chosen and realized as the Mural. The Mural shows a girl who through blowing bubbles into the air has the possibility to move other persons who might not have that possibility due to a certain disability that restrains a person to move freely.

This project is called *Dipin-GO* which means *I paint* in Italian, but it is also a word play where the GO stands for movement. The aim of the project was to improve the citizenship competences of the students that allows for the compensation of cultural, economic and social disadvantages.

Students have worked with much enthusiasm on the project and the art work, and also the reaction of the school was very positive.

The new murals were received well by other teachers and the headmaster which means that in the future, more projects like this can be implemented, both related to the topic of diversity and reflections of the students, as well as with the mural as a method to give the possibility for students to express themselves.

Students have really reflected on important issues and came to new understandings on what diversity means: it can make a community more rich because everyone has something different to offer. Prejudices were thus dismantled and the idea of "other" has got a new, more positive, connotation.



The new mural presenting students' message "To those who live close to disability"







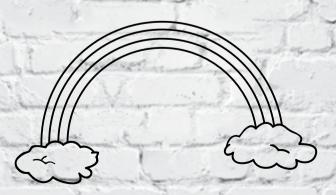


They want peace
- they said it with
the Peace WallScientific High
School Ernesto

Basile



The Scientific High School Ernesto Basile is located in the periphery of Palermo. It came forward in the focus group last year, that in this school there was a wide spread feeling of insecurity and a fear of terrorism. Also, topics which related to the interactions between students were seen as something problematic within the school. This is why teachers decided to encourage students to think and elaborate on themes like peace, diversity and living together. The students' reflections on these themes were shared within the group and together with the art teacher.

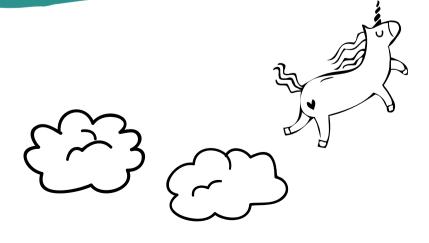


The mural with the strong student's message

Each student designed a way to transform their reflections into an image that could be eventually transformed into a mural. From the different designs of the students, by voting, 3 designs were chosen and realized for the mural. This project called *Peace Wall* was implemented during extra hours in which the art school teacher was available, and therefore other teachers were asked to give some of "their hours" to the project. This lead in some cases to a lower attendance but also to a greater feeling of collaboration in which many teachers were indirectly involved.

The students reacted very well to the project, they were interested and engaged and want to continue these kinds of activities next year, both in terms of topics and in methods. Beside the development of their artistic capacities, and gained knowledge about important topics such as diversity, peace and living together; they also increased their interpersonal skills: how to better work together, share ideas and interact better. The project strength was in the overall collaboration between students, building their empathy, and the school management providing the space to create the project and mural.

The project has made students and teachers more aware of new approaches and concepts and given them the opportunity to reflect on topics and use methods that they normally do not use.











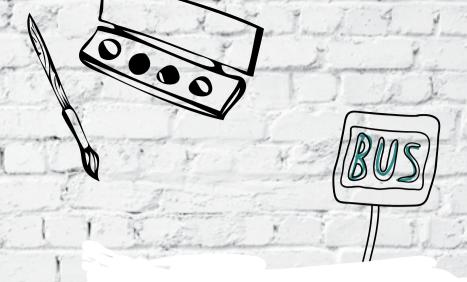


While waiting for change, start the change!

- The Artistic High School Almeyda -

Crispi





The school Almeyda – Crispi is located in a neighbourhood in which most of the students do not live. Therefore, instead of looking at problems in the neighbourhood, they decided to see what they can change in their "own yard" - in their immediate environment - the classrooms and the school itself. As it resulted from problem identification and discussions, students were seriously affected by the poor state of the school building. The school is an artistic high school which means that the classrooms are often cared for poorly because it is thought that it will be dirty soon anyways. Furthermore, the school is old, and money is often not spent on the maintenance of classrooms.

After discussions, students came to the conclusion that they can do something together - without waiting for someone else to finally allocate funds for a school renewal. Three classes launched three projects with a common goal: to take active care of the school's spaces and environment and to show other teachers and students how little is necessary to make some positive changes for all of them.











Fix It Up

When the group of students of a second-year class were asked at the first meeting to think about the problems they see in their school environment, they had difficulties naming things. However, during the conversation, they managed to look around them and see the problems, as something that could be changed for the better. **The door repair** has been recognized as an activity where all the students can engage, but also as a something nice to leave to the new generations of students who will be sitting in this classroom. Furthermore, the door serves as a tangible example and motivation for other students to also do something for the school.

After the initial brainstorm and voting, the students worked in teams to divide the tasks and come up with a good design for the door. The materials for the door came from recycled materials found in the school.

In this project, the students not only took care of the school environment but also had an opportunity to use their artistic talents and skills for the benefit of their school community.

After extensive planning and exchanging ideas, the final realization of the door was done for the end of the school year. The students have designed, implemented and put the new door in place where it will wait patiently for the new school year in which new students can admire its beauty and functionality and, at the same time, think about similar projects of which they will be the initiators.

Solaris

Another class, fourth grade, focused on yet another part of the classroom that needed improvement, **namely the curtains**. Palermo in summer can get quite hot and curtains are therefore necessary in order to keep the sunlight out. Furthermore, the classrooms are currently only provided with a simple blackboard but in order to use a digital one in the future, the class needs the possibility to be darkened. (In Italy there is a policy specifically to increase the use of digital blackboards in school).

Students chose this problem for several reasons: it was an opportunity to create a more comfortable atmosphere in classroom, it gives the possibility to new technologies in the future but also to make the headmaster aware of the inadequate state of the classrooms.

Often students do not take care directly of their classroom as they think this is a responsibility for the school management. However, the students understood the bigger picture, in taking a small action they can create a lot of change. Students are often not asked to be a part of taking care of the classroom, but by doing so, they might be inspired to also change other things within their personal or school environment in the future.

Together they thought about the possible materials and the ways to get them. It took some group effort to put together the materials and curtains in the classroom but

the result was a classroom that looked better and allows the possibility for use of technologies in the future. The final part of the project was to make the headmaster aware of the inadequate state of the classrooms. The students were very enthusiastic about the project, as it was something new for them, in terms of the method they used and ability to create change by being actively involved.

Classi più pulite (A Cleaner Classroom)

The group of students from the third grade, after a brainstorm on problems and solutions, identified the **bad state of the school and the classrooms** as a project necessary and doable within the time and resources given. The students only had a few hours to work on the development and execution of their project during school hours and thus organized themselves autonomously in order to start cleaning the classroom. The students did not only plan to clean their classroom but to also involve the headmaster and other students of the school. **The idea was to be a good example to inspire others to do the same and the students wanted to make a Facebook campaign about taking care of school facilities.**

The students organized themselves and planned a day in which they cleaned the classroom. They have taken the products they need for cleaning from home. Despite the difficulties, such as the distrust in the teachers and in their own capacities at first and the short-time in which the project was developed and implemented, the students have acquired the capacity to make decisions on their own and to put effort in order to change something. It might have been a small action, however, in the end, the students valued the project and its outcomes, saying that it had a very positive influence on the school and it give hopes for change.



Taking care of classroom with new curtains



Students coming up with a design for the door





Students & Co

(condivisione

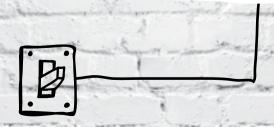
- comunicazione
- coinvolgimento
- collaborazione
- conversazione
- coesione)
- The Classical
 High School Vittorio
 Emanuele 11





The Classical High School Vittorio Emanuele II, the oldest in the city of Palermo and Sicily, dates back to 1549. It is located in the historic center of Palermo. This location also determines their mission: to be reflected in the past heritage and build the future. Today, this school is a point of reference, not only for Palermo citizens, but also to neighbouring small towns and suburbs, and furthermore, lately, the presence of foreign students from outside Europe has increased (2%).

After joining the project Start the Change, students together with teachers did a problem analysis of their personal environment. It was a good and surprising moment for both the teacher and students, as some problems came forward that the teacher did not even know about, such as cyber bullying.



The common multifunctional room

During the first meetings, different classes had their activities separately in which they brainstormed problems and possible solutions/projects. Despite the different classes and different ages, all arrived at similar problems in the end, namely the lack of communication. This has resulted in a final result: a common multifunctional room to improve communication managed by the students themselves.

Class Roberta

After the brainstorming, one of the third-grade classes focused on the lack of communication between students from different classes and between students and staff. They immediately had the idea to look for a space which could function as a meeting point to provide space for communication, to spend their free time, and to socialize. This idea was developed further in the next sessions, in which they added the idea of a library in which students can exchange books with a register to keep track of the books. Furthermore, they found it very important that the room is a space that is managed by the students themselves which gave them a chance to think creatively about how best to use the space and gave them a sense of responsibility.

Class Liliana

The second class, also third grade, came to a similar conclusion on the importance of communication for the school. They wanted to focus on the stimulation of dialogue and found their place in the common room by designing a place on the wall in which students can write topics for discussion that they are interested in. The students decorated the wall with paintings and posters and made a "communication wall". In the process of planning, organizing and realizing the common room, the students have learned to collaborate, to respect other opinions, to negotiate and resolve problems. They have also learned a new approach to make improvements and to self-manage.

Class Catarina

The first grade also focused on communication as it came forward during the first meetings. They felt that younger students were not fully participating in the assembly so they joined in with the other two classes, and participated in the realization of the common room. For the common room, the students of this class were responsible for the furniture of the room that could give space to activities such as seminars, workshops, peer tutoring, screenings, and readings.

This project has increased the communication between students of different classes and given the students the opportunities to share their passions and interests. By doing so, this project aimed to make the school a more familiar and welcoming place in which students can actively contribute. It also gave students the chance to share their opinions with the school management. Even the more introverted students were engaged in the project. According to the teacher, the project has been a good opportunity to value those students who are from ethnic minority backgrounds and thus, all together, it has been an enriching experience for everyone involved.

The students shared their impressions about participating in the project:

It has been an interesting experience because we worked together and discussed our concerns and issues such as discrimination. I feel I am learning what it means to be part of a community and talk to the people.

It was also great to get to know new people from other classes and talk to them about important things, for example the fact that we shouldn't discriminate against anyone especially without actually making an effort to know them first.

We also improved our relationship with the teacher, we feel now we have a more reciprocal relationship in which we have room to say what we deem as important.

Students working together in a common room









Become aware and then share 1.C. Cassara -

Gyida







I.C. Cassarà – Guida is located in Partinico, a town near the city of Palermo. The majority of students are Italian but seeing the history of the school (related to the famous Italian activist and educator Danilo Dolci), they give a lot of time and attention to diversity and mutual understanding. Furthermore, the school has several students with special needs who are included in the main student body with additional support from qualified teachers during lessons.

The educational programme and approach of the school already focusses on diversity, empathy and multiculturalism. At the beginning of the school year, for example, they dedicated particular days to the topics of diversity and "getting to know your peers", in order to prevent conflicts or misunderstandings on a later point in the year.

Furthermore, the school is part of a bigger institution, which includes a primary school designed by Danilo Dolci, the founder of CSC Danilo Dolci. The school also tries to use some of its non-violent and democratic methods to create a process in which every person can express their own voice. The school participated in the Start the Change training with 9 teachers. All teachers were very motivated to learn and develop innovative approaches to sensitive topics but also, saw it as a good opportunity to reflect and confront themselves with the topics proposed by the Start the Change.



Siete (5) connessi Lyou Are (dis) Connected]

The project was created within a first year of lower higher school. The start of the local project was to hear what the students see as problems at school, in their lives or in the neighbourhood. In order to give everyone a voice, teachers organized what they called A Circle Time. In this activity, students sit in a circle in which one student talks and the other students listen. Everyone gets the possibility to talk and to react to other students. During this activity it came forward that one of the problems that students notice in their lives is the use of social networks. Students spend a lot of time on their mobile phones which influences and hinders their real life social interactions. This problem was already identified by teachers and shared during the Start the Change training, and therefore they were very happy that the students identified the same problem by themselves. The teachers already knew that the only way for the situation to change, was if the students themselves would identify the problem on their own and thus were motivated to do something about it.

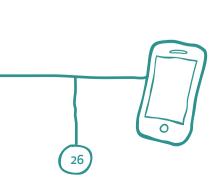








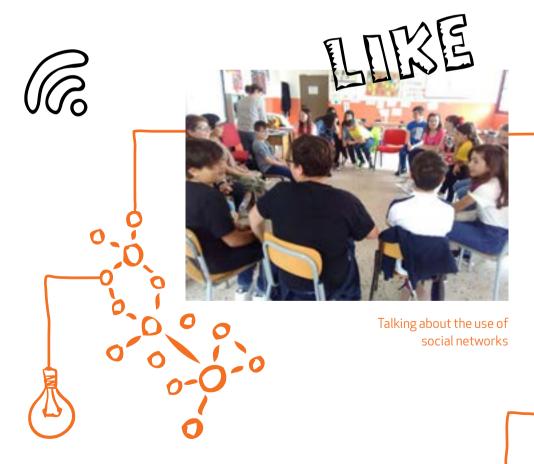
Through brainstorms, videos, listening to stories and meetings with experts, such as a psychologists and the internet police, students achieved the knowledge and responsibility on best practices related to the use of social networks. Furthermore, students have interviewed their peers to get hold of the serious nature of the problem. The project thus aimed to make students more aware of the relationship between them, and to develop a more appropriate and responsible use of digital technologies. Furthermore, the project aimed to increase the responsibility of the new generation to be able to recognize "hidden dangers" within the communication technologies on the internet such as social networks, chats, posting of content on different sites; in order to use it in a correct and responsible way.





The idea of the project was that students wanted to confront the problem first, do their research on the scope of the problem and then function as a model for other students on the use of social networks. Furthermore, what is at the core of this project is the democratic way in dealing with problems, which meant collecting all opinions and giving space to all students to contribute.

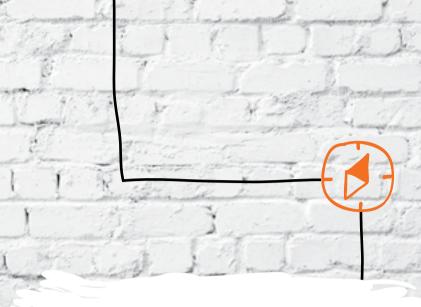
During the *Circle Time*, in which the central themes of the project originated and were discussed, the students showed maturity and were ready to initiate positive change in the school. This was a great attitude to have, especially due to sensitivity of the topic as the use of social networks is already deeply rooted in the everyday life of students. By the end of the project, the students had developed a sort of auto control both on the use of social networks, as well as on the quality of messages that they send through social media channels. In the next period of activities, the students want to use the acquired knowledge to create and present a "box of experience" and inform other classes about the risks of the misusing social media.



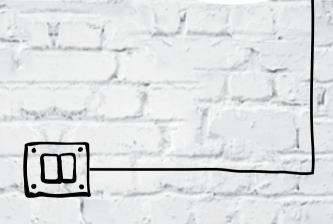




They showed us how to navigate to go beyond diversity - 1.1.5. Orso Mario Corbino



I.I.S. Orso Mario Corbino is a high school with practical and professional specializations including Electronics and electrotechnics, industrial and artisanal production, maintenance and technical assistance, and wellness. It is located in Partinico - province of Palermo. Due to the location of the school, students are mostly Italian and thus the interaction between different cultures is not something common for the students of the school. However, the school follows a clear inclusion policy in which it wants to include people with different kinds of disabilities.



Navigando per superare le diversita LNavigate to Go Beyond Diversity!

At the beginning of the project, teachers and students followed a reflective path on different themes such as **identity**, **prejudices and stereotypes**, **conflict resolution and active citizenship**. Students worked in groups and had the possibility to reflect and brainstorm in a safe environment on themes that dealt with accepting the diversity. For two months the students had the opportunity to meet every week and have discussions, brainstorms and reflections. As a methodology, the students choose to visualize the thinking process and outcomes on cardboard posters and hang them in the classrooms, also to encourage other students and teachers to think about these themes. For example, one brainstorm was about the phrase: "Nobody is inferior" and students were invited to think and reflect for themselves what this meant for them and write their answers on a piece of paper.

The project also aimed to increase the capacity of students to work and collaborate, using dialogue as a non-violent solution for conflicts within the group. Through these kinds of reflections, discussions and visual expressions the students achieved a greater awareness of the importance to accept diversity. They wanted to put this awareness into practice in the final event of the project which was an excursion of the class to a boat in the port of Palermo. In this class there is a girl who uses a wheelchair and often she is excluded from activities outside of the school because it is seen as "too

difficult" to let her participate. In order for her to join too and feel included, the other students of the class had to think about how they could include her during the excursion, and actively participate. She was able to leave her wheelchair and sit with her classmates. She said that she really enjoyed the day and on a professional level it gave her a chance to dream about her future. Also, she felt included in all parts of the process, both before and during the activities which fostered the feeling of inclusion for all. It was fruitful experience which can set an example for future activities with a higher participation of students in the organising phases.



The goal of this gathering was to think about the differences that surround us and things we take for granted, for example a simple excursion.

So little is needed, only a few friends who see and understand the needs of each other and who make the effort for something to be possible.

Students working in groups



Excursion in the port of Palermo organised by students









Three Steps to the New District

- The Lower Secondary School Mattarella





The Lower Secondary School Mattarella is a school located in a neighbourhood of Palermo called "Bonagia". It is the only school and therefore a key place for the kids who live there. The neighbourhood is a problematic area of the city since it is located in the outskirts of Palermo and poorly served in terms of public services. Public transportation is highly inefficient and commutes to more central areas of the city are highly time consuming. Most of the neighbourhood has been built for housing purposes, but over time the social and community life has been completely ignored so that currently the only two businesses in the whole area are a coffee shop and a supermarket. Moreover, there are just a handful of possible hangout areas available for young people living there. There are also several problems in the school related to family, disabilities and physical differences, however the students did not develop these problems into a project because it was too sensitive and the environment, due to its emotional distance, was a better topic to unite and motivate students.



New District

The group of students, aged 11/12 years old, started with preparation classes on diversity, human rights and conflict resolution. These kind of "warm up" activities were brought into practice during the planning, developing and implementation of the local project. The problem analysis of the school and environment resulted in choosing the environment surrounding of the school as the problematic area. There is no greenery, space for young people and litter is everywhere. The students were divided into groups based on themes and worked on transforming problems into solutions and projects. The initial ideas were around cleaning and parks, the students thought about feasible projects and came up with three ideas, all under the project name New District.

One idea was to carry out some cleaning activities of a particularly dirty area of the neighbourhood while taking pictures to be used for a Facebook campaign in which they would show how much the place changed if one takes care of it. An important part of this idea was to use leaflets and social networks to involve the local community.

The second idea was to organize a home-made sweets sale to fundraise the purchase of plants to decorate the little park in front of the school and eventually other parks of the neighbourhood, depending on the amount of sold cookies.

The third idea was an awareness raising campaign to show the actual conditions of the neighbourhood and try to involve more students in participating in their community improvement and do something for their neighbourhood.

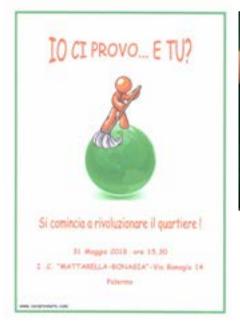
Due to a lack of time, the students were unable to complete all three ideas, but they are continuing with this project in the next school year and implementing the activities in order to make their school environment more green and pleasant. The students presented all projects during the final activity at the end of the school year and made flyers for the cleaning action and the cookie sale. Students were so motivated and eager to start with their project aiming at "making Bonagia a beautiful place to live!" as one of the students said. On one flyer, the students wrote "lo ci provo... e tu?" which means "I will try it, and you?" which relates to the cleaning activities in the neighbourhood. The leaflet for selling sweets used an Italian saying "Dolci far niente" which means the sweetness of doing nothing and transformed this into "the sweetness of doing a lot".

DOLCI FAR



THE SWEETNESS OF DOING A LOT With this project, students have developed transferable skills such as collaboration, analysing and research skills, creative skills, and team work; which is something that is useful for their future lives. Especially because team work activities are not very common in Italian education. Furthermore, the project has promoted the interaction between the school environment and the neighbourhood, and students have developed and increased their observation of the reality of the territory, which is now more aware, accurate and reasoned. The students also learned more about their rights and duties as active citizens and learned to have and to take responsibility. The project also had its impact on the teachers, as evaluation of activities are now used by several teachers in classroom activities.

These students have shown to their neighbours that they can and must do something if they want better living conditions. Some problems are complex and can't be solved overnight, but you can still do something today. These students sent a clear message to the local community that they wanted a change and showed how things can get better when people are united and care about the common goal.





Starting the change in SLOVENIA

Ten schools from Slovenia participated in the project Start the Change:

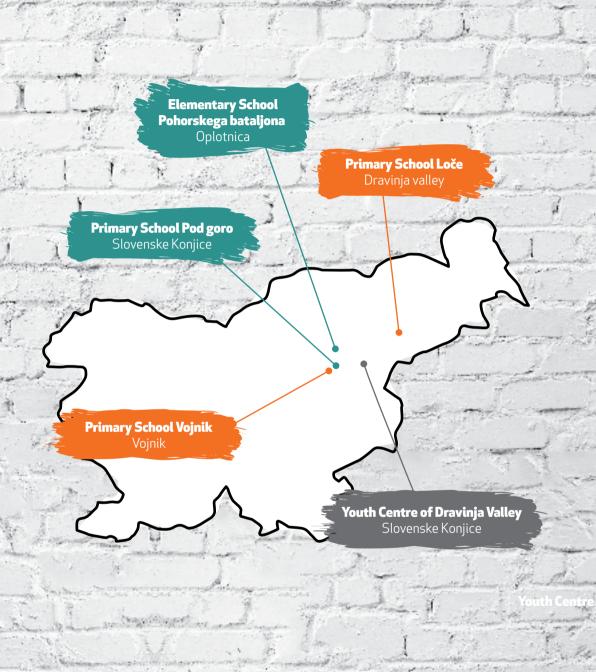
Grammar School Slovenske Konjice, Primary School Jožeta Pučnika Črešnjevec, Primary School Loče, Primary School Ob Dravinji, Primary School Pod goro, Primary School Pohorskega bataljona Oplotnica, Primary School Vojnik, Primary School Zreče, Secondary Vocational School Zreče, High School Slovenska Bistrica.

The experienced partner organization Youth Centre of Dravinja Valley took care that both teachers and students get necessary support in planning and implementing their projects.

When participating in the focus groups implemented during the first year of project, Slovenian students identified topics of self-esteem, psychological violence and bullying as the key topics to discuss and pay attention to in their school projects because those were the issues not talked about enough. What was common for all projects was that the students firstly researched the issue they have considered important and then through discussions developed creative workshops that they implemented with their younger peers in order to pass their newly gained knowledge. Another common thing for all students who were the members of the project teams was also the fear if their workshops will be well received by their peers, but it was demonstrated over and over that just openning discussions on these relevant topics are very well accepted by young people. The students in these projects are hoping that this was just the beginning of one wonderful story about peer learning on interesting and relevant topics that can help everyone to develop personal and social competences.

In front of you are the stories of four schools and their projects:

Primary School Loče, Primary School Pod goro, Primary School Pohorskega bataljona, Primary School Vojnik.



8

Get to know
Yourself-better
by getting to
know each other
- Primary School
Loče



Primary School Loče is situated in the Dravinja valley in Savinjska region in Slovenia. This school has two district schools and all together 300 students that come from the town of Loče and the surrounding villages. They try to be in touch with the local community and be active participants there - one of the opportunities for that is their traditional Christmas fair where students get a chance to present their works of art to the local community. They hold more than 15 various workshops and extra curriculum activities where children can enjoy creating and discovering new things.

They got involved with the Start the Change project because they wanted to show their students that they can encourage and start resolving challenges they face and notice in their lives, the lives of their peers and the local community.



Peer to Peer workshops about self-esteem

The students who participated in the research about young people's needs within the *Start the Change* project through their school's focus group, implemented in previous school year, joined their school's youth group to contribute in overcoming challenges identified in the research, in this new school year. All members were students of higher classes and they prepared activities through which they tackled one of the challenges of growing up which came out during the research. **They felt that youngsters don't trust themselves as much or have distinctively poor or bad self-esteem and self-image.** They noticed that this challenge usually presents itself when they enter the adolescence. They prepared the workshops and decided to implement them with younger peers aged 9 to 11 years old. This target audience was selected because in their opinion major challenges with positive self-esteem and self-image arise with the beginning of puberty. With these workshops they wanted to better equip the students with information and discuss how to improve a self-esteem.

The project team prepared workshops through which they worked together with younger students to discuss their positive qualities and skills while getting to know each other better. After the activities one of the members of the project team could not hide the excitement: "At the beginning I was nervous. I was afraid that students will not like the workshop we prepared. I am very pleased that our peers found the workshop interesting."

Different activities were implemented and here we share some that were identified as the most useful:

SWICHING THE SEATS - Participants at the workshop first had to switch seats so they sat next to a peer that they usually didn't sit with.

VIDEO WATCHING - Then the school project team showed a short video that explained what self-esteem is. After that they led a short discussion to see, if the participants understood the content of the video. Together they searched for examples of positive self-esteem thinking.

SELF-ESTEEM WORKSHEETS - They distributed working sheets in which each student filled in one's positive characteristics and features. A few participating students had challenges with finding something positive about them, so the school project team encouraged them and helped them with the task.

PASSING THE POSITIVITY BALL - Next task was passing the ball between the participants. When an individual received the ball, one had to tell one positive characteristic or feature about oneself and one positive characteristic or feature about the person the ball was passed on to.



CHARADES - Participants had to describe a peer of their choosing through charades focusing on positive characteristics, features or skills that they have. Others were guessing who is presented.

DISCUSSIONS - At the end there was a short concluding discussion to check, if youngsters understood the concept of positive self-esteem.

62 students participated in the workshops, as the group was large the school project team went to individual classes. The degree of trust was therefore bigger and the participants were more engaged and open.

The students who were the members of the school project team showed significant independence on all levels of planning, preparing and implementing of activities. Coordinators at school and youth workers from Youth Centre were needed mainly for technical support, checking prepared materials and providing guidelines about additional materials they could consider using and tips on how to implement specific activities. The school project team showed a strong ability to come up with good solutions when facing challenges and great confidence in planning, preparing and implementing activities with the students.

Members of the school project team said that they were very proud when they saw how participating students enjoyed themselves during the workshops and when they told them that they wish they could have more activities like this at school. They reported also that the teachers noticed a growth in trust between students in the individual classes, that they were more prepared to praise each other, take and give credit for work and show more confidence when dealing with challenges of school work and growing up.





Students talk about self-confidence



They picked the right challenge - Primary School

Pod goro





Primary School Pod goro is one of two primary schools in Slovenske Konjice and, with two district schools, it has 534 students. The school tries to provide the best learning environment where their students feel safe and comfortable to explore. They wish to enable each student to accomplish development and growth according to their abilities. To develop and maintain values such as respect, knowledge, work and learning habits, responsibility, good interpersonal relationships and acceptance of diversity. They encourage students to develop curiosity, creativity, perseverance and a sense of aesthetics in culture. The school promotes a healthy and active way of life and strives for a positive view of the world. These were the reasons the school decided to participate in the project Start the Change. They wanted to give students an opportunity through which they can learn the whole process of creating and implementing a project and to empower and encourage them to be active participants and co-creators of the school community.

The students recognized the importance of talking about psychological violence

The school project team decided to work on the challenge of bullying, particularly about psychological violence occurring among peers as one of the issues they face daily and throughout the whole schooling. Through the planning they learned more about types and occurrences that are in fact psychological violence but are not perceived as such because they happen so often. During the discussion in the working sessions students felt comfortable enough and opened up about their own experiences regarding the chosen challenge. **All of them were victims of it at some point, in some cases also instigators of it or knew someone who was a victim.** They felt that the best way to prevent psychological violence among peers would be to start working with the youngest students at school. They prepared informative posters about what constitutes psychological violence and how to recognize something that isn't a joke but bullying. They also prepared short sketches about three everyday events that can happen in school regarding bullying (taunting, talking behind someone's back, provocation).

Firstly, they wanted to implement the activity only with younger students but then the word about their workshop got around and they've been asked if they could implement it for older students too. They said: "This showed us we picked the right issue and that also others want something to change about it."

Learning through acting

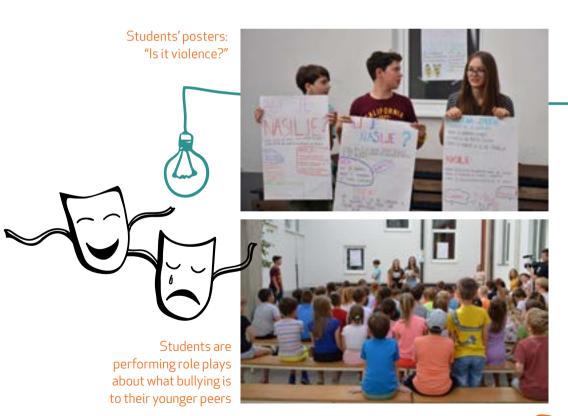
The youngsters first acted out the negative situation and then "paused it". Directly after that they held a short discussion with participants about it and asked them what they saw, if it was handled correctly, if it was a positive or negative situation, if they ever found themselves in similar situations, how did they feel, act, if they were ever a bully in a similar situation. Participants sometimes had difficulties to identify their experience as an experience of being bullied (mostly due to their young age). At this point the school project team gave detailed and practical examples.

"Sometimes we forget that a joke can become offensive or hurtful. Maybe it's funny at first but if you become the subject of a joke and hear it again and again it can really hurt you. Especially if it's about something you're insecure about." said one of the participants.

They also asked the participating students to offer solutions on how to react in case of bullying, how to prevent or stop it. Participants mostly offered solutions regarding situations such as taunting and provocation or talking behind someone's back which was a bigger challenge for participants. After the short discussion the school project team showed the same situation but with positive outcome in order to offer one possible solution on how to prevent or stop bullying. During the conclusion, one of the students said: "The activity was great. I hope they will organize more workshops about this topic."

The school project team showed a very strong level of independence. Only occasionally they needed some guidelines and support from youth workers from Youth Centre of Dravinja Valley on how to present more sensitive topics and how to react when their experience and worldview clashes with someone else's.

The reaction of students showed that they want and need to discuss this topic, which was clearly shown when the school project group was asked for additional workshops by their older peers. Some of them got the information on what experience of psychological violence entails for the first time. Youngsters in the school project team got the opportunity to openly discuss their experiences and gained knowledge on how to react or prevent bullying. They became more aware in how to defend themselves, and courageously express themselves when some joke went too far, etc.



10

It's OK to be different!-

Primary School Pohorskega bataljona





Primary School Pohorskega bataljona is situated in the town of Oplotnica and has two district schools - together they have 412 students. The school operates on the fundamental human values related to responsibility, respect, security, cooperation and mutual assistance and care for the environment. They strive to create a learning and educational environment in the physical, psychological, social and spiritual sense to ensure inclusion and acceptance of diversity, common problem solving, collaboration and commitment to each individual, and the search for excellence of individuals and relationships. They try to encourage their students to be creative, take responsibility for their behaviour and accept the boundaries for successful living in the community. Special attention is paid to the creation of good interpersonal relationships, solidarity and care for peers, mutual respect and respecting diversity in the classroom itself. These are the reasons why they participated in the project Start the Change.



Flamingo Filip

Originally the school project team decided to take on the challenge of unsafe and excessive use of mobile phones. But due to the changes of members within the school project team they changed the issue they wanted to address, as the most current of the issues discussed during the focus groups was about migration. There were still discussions about the last migrant wave and the debate that was held around it and it was felt that the society in general needs to discuss social diversity more. So, on the basis of the story about discrimination "Flamingo Filip", written and illustrated by a student attending Primary School Pohorskega bataljona; the school project team prepared a puppet theatre play about discrimination based on nationality. The sketch and story can be used in addressing minorities and other vulnerable social groups since its main message is acceptance of diversity and how diversity enriches the communities and societies. After the sketch they held a discussion about discrimination and prejudice and how to deal with diversity. The level of discussion was adjusted to the age of the target group (age 6-8). For this reason the discussion was more general – it started with dealing with diversity and from that on discussing race and nationality. They asked the participants to share their experiences and observations about the topic

The student Nik, author of the story, told us after the activity: "The making of the picture book took a long time. For one illustration I needed about 8 hours. The main message is that it's OK to be different, to stand out and that you can always find someone who will accept and love you for who you are."

a bigger play and to act it out for the whole school.

and how would they act in similar situations showed in the play. In the next school year they hope to develop the play into





Flamingo Filip and friends teaching students about discrimination











The school who encourage students to be the instigators of the change they want - Primary School Vojnik



Primary School Vojnik was first mentioned in written sources in 1760. Today it has three district schools and all together 751 students. The school district is quite big, the students come from many small and big villages around Vojnik and mostly come to school by bus. The school tries to fulfil every student's needs, so they organize several after school activities. The school has been actively involved in different national projects organized by Ministry of Education, Science and Sport for many years and is one of the best-equipped schools with modern technology in Savinjska region. The school is also well known for their research projects. During the last five years they carried out and published more than 40 research papers, some of which have been used by the public. In the spirit to give their students additional opportunities to get



In the spirit to give their students additional opportunities to get to know themselves, their peers, the world around them, to develop competences in project planning and to be the instigators for changes they want and need in their environment they decided to participate in the project Start the Change.

Let's help each other in building positive self-esteem

The school project team, which consisted of the students that were part of the research focus group in the previous school year, showed a huge amount of independence during the planning and preparing of their school project. Coordinators at school and youth workers for Youth Centre of Dravinja Valley were there mainly for technical support. Minor guidelines were needed on how to handle the debate, for example to be careful in phrasing specific topics or not to generalize and stereotype gender roles and expected behaviour.

Students from the school project team recognized building a positive self-esteem as the biggest challenge they and their peers face at the moment. They decided to prepare activities for building a positive self-image so they implemented their activity during class management time. The school project team split in half and each

team held the activity in one class. They held the discussion about what self-esteem is and what the difference between self-esteem and self-confidence is. At first participants weren't so open and gave sarcastic or joking answers. But after a while they were encouraged to be more truthful. Participants soon started to feel more comfortable and trusting. Then each participant was asked to identify one positive characteristic, one skill and one thing they like about themselves. If one had difficulties at that, the school project team asked other participants to help. For example when one participant said: "I don't think I'm particularly good at anything at school or otherwise,"

the classmates were ready to remind that person that the person is always willing to help them feel better if they're sad or upset. **This activity also showed the difference between the perception of ourselves and how other people see us.** Participants also talked about one thing they would like to change and how they can make the change happen. The school project team then gave them real examples of statements that they found in magazines (e.g. boys don't care about their appearances, boys have better self-esteem than girls) and checked how many students agreed with it. They also searched for reasons why participants do or don't agree with the statements. Most of them agreed that it seems that girls care more about the appearances and that this can be part of the reason boys have a better self-image.

One of the participating students expressed her opinion: "Boys really give the impression that they don't care about how they look like too much and don't spend much time in front of the mirror. Look at the magazines! Most of them focus on girls! How to look, how to act to be 'cool'... I practically never see that for guys."

One of the boys added: "It's hard. You should care how you look, but not too much and never show it. And you should be good at sports and school and everything. It makes you feel like you're not allowed to make mistakes. And then I get a bad grade or something and it makes me feel really 'horrible' but I'm expected to just simply deal with it. Girls can show that they're upset, we can't."

The activity helped with group dynamics in individual classes where the activities were held. They were encouraged to communicate more constructively and are faster to help and listen to one another.

The project had the biggest impact on students included in the school project team. Members became more confident in expressing their opinions. They learned how to compromise better and how to find solutions that take in consideration as many members as possible. "The workshop was not easy. It took a lot of effort to get it done. I'm glad we did it," said one member of the school project team after the activity.

The students are implementing activities for building a positive self-image



The school project team





Starting the change in UK

Ten schools from United Kingdom participated in the project, located in different parts of London and North East of England. The schools are:

Barking Abbey School, Canons High School, ELAM, The Hermitage Academy, Laurence Jackson School, Parkside Academy, Sir John Cass, St Luke's, Secondary School Swanlea, Virginia Primary School.

The UK schools developed and implemented their projects with the support of the partner organization Think Global and local organisations including HEC Global Learning and County Durham Council.

The schools reflect the diversity of their own communities in the UK, London is highly diverse whereas in North East England there are primarily White British working class communities. They face different challenges depending on the communities they live in. Students identified the topics they feel they are affected by and wanted to discuss and raise awareness about, like mental health, extremism, inter-cultural issues, knife crime, impact of waste, discrimination...

The students made videos, explored identity and history through art, made podcast on controversial issues, facilitated workshops with their peers, critically thought about how to contribute creatively in their local communities.

Some schools decided to utilize the project to bring the students closer to each other and making it possible for them to exchange ideas, experiences and plan how to improve relationships in their communities.

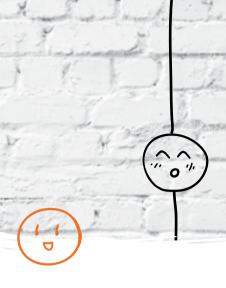
Students expressed satisfaction with their participation because they had an opportunity to focus on topics that they think are—important – they got the opportunity for their voices to be heard!





Use your Voice Barking Abbey School





Barking Abbey School is a London secondary school of approximately 2,000 students, with an intake of 270 students per year. The students at the school are from the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, and Redbridge. These areas are very multicultural and this is reflected within the staff and students of the school.

The school engaged with the *Start the Change* project in order to educate young people on global issues and reflect on the impact the society has on them. They wanted to empower the young people to use their voice through self-expression and self-publishing.

The aim of the school project was to educate students on global issues and use art and photography lessons to bring global learning into the classroom. They wanted to create more collaborative research and art work through group work within the art and photography curriculum. By discussing the project with the students, it was decided that a zine and music video would be created as final project pieces.



Communication important topics in a creative way

The project started with students
learning about the sustainable
development goals and looking at
different types of street art, for
example Banksy. They then created
their own street art posters and wrote
articles based on personal experiences of
local and global issues, to feature in the Barking
Abbey zine. These zines were put together by the
students and then printed to be sold at the summer fair-it completely sold out!

The zine making workshop was extremely successful and the school has decided to include this as a new scheme of work across Year 9 (13-14 years) and to continue to sell the zines at future summer fairs. This will ensure that students can develop their understanding of the sustainable development goals, local and global issues, activism and social action.

In addition to creating the zines, the art department worked collaboratively with dance and music on this project too. The intention was to develop a new cross-curricular project at the school. The students wanted to create something for the *Barking Inspire festival* which is a cultural festival among groups of schools in the area. Each year more schools and young people have been able to showcase their talent and hard work. This school created a music video with the theme 'Our Barking', which was challenging for students as they had to describe their feelings of being suspended between a dream and a nightmare, uncertain of their futures in these uncertain times.

Before creating this music video, 10 students worked with a local singer/song writer to create a song for the video. They reflected on what had happened in Grenfell (devastating fire of the Grenfell tower in 2017) and the impact grime music has had on mainstream music, with particular focus on Stormzy's records - in order to explore identity and social justice. Through music lessons, the students composed the music and lyrics, and then recorded the song too. A group of 40 students from different age groups worked with the dance teacher to choreograph dance moves for the video. The final video was shown at the *Inspire Festival* in July 2017.

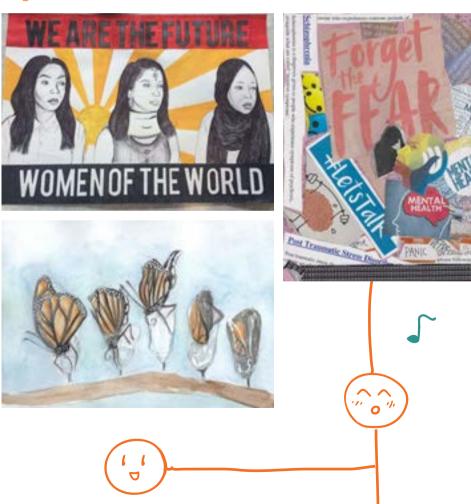
By using creative tools, the young people have really connected with global and local issues, they have been able to explore their identity as individuals and also as a school. Furthermore, they have created tangible projects which they can look back at and be proud of.

Pupils really enjoyed making links to the real world and outside ideas beyond the class room. (Art Teacher about students)

Let this music video inspires you to talk with students about important topics ir a creative way: https://vimeo.com/278290397



Images of the zines





Let's talk about Social media Canons High School

E-SAFETY MEDIALITERACY
PREJUDICE



Modern Social Issues

As teachers were from different subject areas, they wanted to create Personal, Social, Health and Economic lessons (hereandafter PSHE lessons) which would provide students with the ability to think critically about the world around them. They have had bullying incidences and a lack of integration between students of different backgrounds. Teachers wanted to help students learn how to question stereotypes and information on social media, and provide opportunities to develop their awareness of the wider world. Also, they wanted students to feel that they can speak up during PSHE lessons and discuss sensitive issues knowing their teacher will be able to respond in an effective way.

Teachers designed 6 lesson plans and teaching resources under the title *Modern Social Issues* to be taught during PSHE lessons by each form tutor across Year 9 who are now going into Year 10 (14-15 years). 210 students have been involved in total and the whole school will be engaged through an assembly at the end of the student projects. The lessons they are being taught include: **prejudice, homophobia, e-safety, fake news and media literacy, faith and hate crime, and EXTREMISM**.

Through the lessons, the students have been very engaged and have been contributing to the discussion. Feedback from the teachers who are leading the sessions showed that although students are aware of the inaccuracy of news on social media, they still struggle to think critically about controversial headlines. The teachers have found that the detailed lesson plans have allowed them to frame the discussion within a given context, which keeps the students focussed.

These lessons led on to a student-led project where students have been put into groups of 5 or 6 in each class to create a storyboard for a video around one of the themes they have explored during the PSHE lessons. In the new term, the storyboards will enter a school 'Dragon's Den' style competition. This will be judged by the school's *Digital Leaders* who are a group of 6 students from across the school and led by a maths teacher. The *Digital Leaders* do extracurricular work on digital learning. The storyboard which wins, will have their storyboard made into a film and this will be shown during a school assembly and put on the school's youtube page too.

This project has been such a success that it will be integrated into Canons High School and become a key part of the school's PSHE curriculum. In addition to the lessons for Year 9, there will be a whole school approach exploring specific topics connected to this project through assemblies and workshops with external organisations.

Students have been fully engaged with the work and are happy to share their views and opinions openly. (Geography teacher)



EXTREMISM

CRIME

FAKE NEWS

MEDIA LITERACY

FAITH AND HATE

PREJUDICE

E-SAFETY

HOMOPHOBIA





They are aware of the importance of developing critical thinking - ELAM



Think Before You Speak

The key objectives of ELAM's *Think Before You Speak* podcast project was to highlight the importance of critical thinking when engaging in conversation with challenging themes, to introduce students to an alternative form of media and develop new skills. The project began with a call out to students across the sixth form and this helped to bring a cross-section of students who hadn't met or spoken to each other before. The series of workshops encouraged students to use their critical thinking skills, focussing specifically on topics related to Mental Health, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC), LGBTQIA and current events. The lesson plans and activities used enabled students to feel confident and helped to prepare them for the live podcast sessions.

The students involved in the project organised themselves independently and scheduled meetings which they have conducted in a professional manner. They divided the responsibilities for the podcasts between them. A group would focus on researching a given topic, another would find external speakers, someone to host the panel discussion, another to create music for the podcast, and film and media trainees to record and film the session.

Podcasts were recorded in studios available at the sixth form. The skills gained from this project are transferable and adaptable outside of the podcast project. For example, as returning panel members they have had to learn how to employ active listening skills in order to have an impactful conversation.

The discussions that the students were engaged in have gone beyond the small group of students engaged in this project. The conversations they have had on the podcasts have sparked wider conversations in the school canteen and classrooms. Also, teaching staff have reported that it has impacted on the quality of discussion in the classrooms and engagement regarding tough subjects.

The critical thinking sessions have significantly impacted the way that students view and process the world, and how they think and engage in conversations. It has also managed to have a positive impact on the whole school. The students witnessing other students having these tough conversations on such a public platform have been inspired to get involved. The young people involved in the project have expressed an interest in continuing the podcasts after the *Start the Change* has ended and have also expressed looking into careers that support their new found skills sets.



Students really liked this project and their comments are the best proof for that:

My experience with 'Think Before You Speak' pod was amazing! I was given opportunities that I never thought I would be able to have! Being involved in the podcast has definitely given me the skills to apply in other projects.

I found that I have become a lot more confident in my speaking and communicating with people.

Having the chance to work on the podcast was very beneficial to me because it allowed me to hear and learn from other people's life experiences. It has taught me to respect other people's opinions as everyone has had different life experiences and upbringings.

Listen for yourself why the students are delighted with creating a podcast in the school: https://soundcloud.com/thinkb4uspeakpodcast/tracks









- The Hermitage Academy



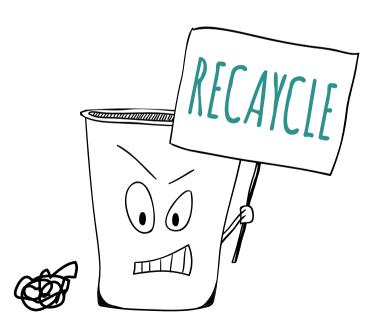
The impact of waste

They wanted students to gain an understanding of the impact of waste both locally and globally. Their aim was to develop students' understanding of sustainability, waste and the sustainable development goals. Ideally, they hope the students will take the knowledge from this project and share their understanding with their peers and family.

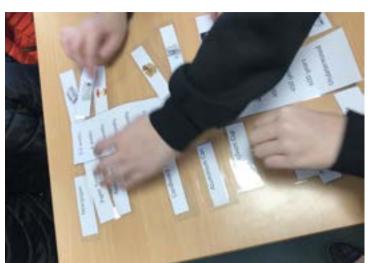
The school worked with a local charity called the The Illuminating Project. The students had three workshops on issues of waste both locally and globally. Students used these workshops to design and create a final display. The students created this display out of waste material and it will be displayed in a local shop during the Christmas Light Turn On event at Chester-le-Street highstreet.

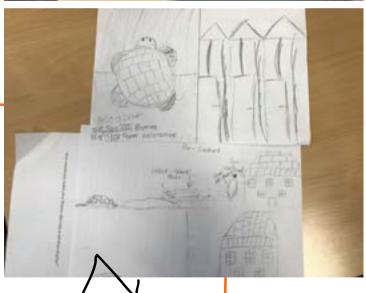
This has been focussed on engaging students and parents into a community based project, alongside educating students on the issues of waste.

Teachers say that one of the key lessons for them - teachers - is the importance of connecting with local community organisations. The students benefited by seeing the practical implications of waste on both the local community and globally.



Ideas for display











New Friendship between schools

- Laurence

Jackson School





Laurence Jackson School is a mixed secondary school (11-16 years) in North East England. The students in the school are primarily White British from working class backgrounds. It is for this reason that the school felt that cultural development and awareness could be improved through engagement with the *Start the Change* project. The students can grow significantly by understanding and accepting differences, getting involved in volunteering projects and supporting the wider school community.

"We, as teachers had a very clear idea of what we wanted to achieve through the Start the Change project. The aim was to enhance and develop the school's Global Citizenship provision by working with partner schools to develop an active citizenship model. We wanted our students to have a safe space to discuss issues which affect them and to better understand global issues too. Furthermore, we wanted to develop their critical thinking skills and their capacity to make informed decisions."



Four parts, one goal

The project was split into 4 different parts. The first part was 'The Global Project' which worked with a core group of key stage 3 students (11-14yrs). The students wanted to experience first-hand the day-to-day lives of young people living in poverty. The students spoke with each school department to carry out one lesson without the use of basic class equipment. This allowed the students to critically evaluate their own preconceptions and to understand how difficult it can be for young people across the globe to access education. This inspired students to brainstorm different contributions that the students can lead on, to help a school in a less economically developed country- there were many ideas generated including a project to fund a donkey library. The students want to continue their research and put together a plan to raise money or books for a specific school in a certain region in the Global South.

The second part of the project was a **Regional Project** - the school worked with Parkside Academy on a cultural awareness project and sharing experiences. The students also had a Prevent awareness session with Tom Llewellyn-Jones from Tower Hamlets Local Authority in London. This gave the students a chance to engage with students from another school and speak about prejudice, stereotypes and identity.

A group of 8 students had a further opportunity to connect with the Parkside students through an educational visit to London which was the third part of this project: **National Project.** This included an education session with the UK Parliament Education Centre and a day in Canons High School - a London based school which is also part of the Start the Change project.

"Canons High School is very diverse, and our students were able to meet and share experiences with their students involved with the Start the Change project. This trip was eye-opening for the students, many of whom had never visited a big city, let alone a global city like London. Also, meeting their peers at Canons High School gave them a chance to speak with young people from different racial backgrounds and helped them to understand and accept difference. We hope that the friendships developed between the students from Laurence Jackson, Parkside and Canon High School will continue", said one of the teachers.

Taking the experiences from these 3 parts of the project, the students designed a **memorial garden** for the new school grounds. This will bring together elements of identity, peace-building, and community members who were part of the army and died in conflict. This part of the programme will commence in the new term. The final designs have been submitted for a school competition and once the winner has been announced the work on the garden will begin.

Being involved in "Start the Change" has been of benefit to the school, it has provided us with opportunities that we wouldn't usually gain. From a teacher professional development perspective and from a pupil experience perspective. I think there will be a physical lasting legacy in the school in the form of the memorial garden. (Teacher)





How to do more within locality - Parkside Academy



Parkside Academy is a secondary school with approximately 750 students who attend the school from the local village of Willington and neighbouring villages. Most students are of White British heritage and there are very few from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The school is a specialist school in sport. The school has many awards, including Healthy School status and the International Award for the development of students' understanding of other cultures.

The school chose to be part of the Start the Change project to build a whole school awareness of peace-building projects to make students and staff more aware of how to prevent radicalisation and in turn develop a greater understanding for parents, families, friends and the wider community. They further want to develop the critical thinking skills of their students so that they can learn to ask the right questions.

As Parkside are part of a cluster involved with the Global Learning Programme and they have a weekly global learning activity for all students each week. It is an ideal existing avenue with curriculum time to develop and embed the learning from the Start the Change beyond the life of the project.



Four projects in one

The aim of the projects was to support the students participating in the project to develop into critical thinkers with an awareness of global issues, developing their capacity to make informed decisions and take action. They decided to divide their projects into 4 areas for greater focus and to potentially do more within their locality.

The first part of the project was focussed on a local initiative. The Start the Change team which consisted of 8 students and 2 teachers, organised a hamper and gift collection, and a Christmas dinner for the elderly. They usually do this every year, but this year they wanted to do more and to **raise awareness about vulnerable people** within their local communities. Form tutors were provided with posters and powerpoint presentations to help students understand the importance of the cause. A competition was launched were the class with the most donations would win a prize. The whole school came together to create Christmas hampers and gift packages.

"If we want students to become global citizens, we have to teach them about empathy and giving. This part of the project really helped to set the foundations for the rest of this project", said one of the teachers.

The next stage of the project had a regional element. In order to develop the resilience of their students, the project team connected with students from a different region and took all students out of their comfort zone. Students from both schools worked together and had an opportunity to meet people from a different setting, area, community etc. in order to build friendships to continue through to National project and hopefully beyond. The day took the form of a 'getting to know you day' and the Parkside School Counsellor organised activities to allow students to feel comfortable with each other e.g. in 1 minute tell the other person all about you. This then enabled all students to find something out about each other and break the ice.

Students were able to speak freely and form friendships that have continued since that particular day. They also got the opportunity to find out about where each other were from, the community they live and go to school in and for many this was a vast contrast to their own. In the afternoon Thomas Llewelyn-Jones attended to run a seminar on fake news. This was received well by all students and staff. **The reason for this part of the project was to show students that there is a variety of places nearby where you can experience differences from your own surroundings.**

For the third part of the project they took things to a more national scale with a **Cultural Development Project.** This included a Parliament Visit and a day at Canons High School in London. They decided to complete National Project with Laurence Jackson School again. The idea was to take a two day trip to London to experience the diverse nature of the city and also to include elements of sightseeing, visiting the Houses of Parliament

and spending some time at Canons High School in Harrow.

Students were introduced to how multicultural London was from the moment they got off the train. For the vast majority of both groups this was their first trip to London and for some a very apprehensive trip that they gladly overcame.

The reason for this part of the project was to enable students to compare London to Willington, County Durham, whereby 99.9% of the school they are based in is White British. To also look at the makeup of society – Willington, old mining town to London – a capital city, fast paced. The students found it fascinating.

The final part of the project took a global stance - **Education around the World.** Students decided that they wanted to raise awareness of the situation around the world by asking departments within the school to dedicate one lesson during a particular day whereby they taught without any materials, electricity or internet. The idea was that students would get first-hand experience of what being taught in a school without equipment would be like, allowing students to show empathy for others in a less fortunate community than them.

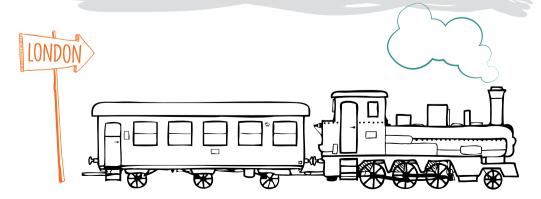
By working with partner schools to develop an active citizenship model, students can make informed decisions on what actions are needed to develop safe spaces, change their school, community and wider world for the better.

The studens and a teacher about the experience:

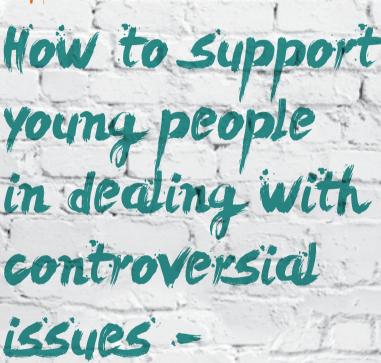
All the OAPs were smiling and said how much they had enjoyed it. (student)

It has made the school more aware of the local community and those who need care and attention even just a cup of coffee/tea and a chat with someone. (student)

It has challenged the school ethos and how we as a school can help in the local community including people of an older generation. (teacher)







Sir John Cass

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Four groups of students starting a change

The aim of the project was to raise awareness of controversial issues using a variety of methods. This project engaged one Year 8 form of 30 students to do the activities and share the outcomes with rest of the year group.

For the first PSHE lesson for this project, teachers and students focussed on global citizenship, the sustainable development goals and the role that young people can have to create change in this world. **The students went to discuss what they think are issues affecting their peers. Topics included sexism, inequality, knife crime, and domestic and child abuse.** The students were then divided into groups to focus on a topic each. Each group decided to research and share information about each of these issues in a different way.

One group chose to plan, write and act out a short role play on **sexism**. This was then performed to the other classes in the year.

Another group discussed and researched **inequality around the world** - and the different forms it takes. Students chose not to focus on the negativity of inequality and instead decided to find cases of equality which could be celebrated. Posters were made explaining the importance of equality and this was presented in class.

Knife crime is becoming a big issue for inner city schools, this is why they wanted to ensure that this had a broad impact across the school. A display board in the main part of the school was made available to display information about knife crime and safety. The students created images, found quotes, designed posters and a scroll of pledges they would like to achieve. This will be put up in the new term to raise awareness among new students and to ensure that the display is available for a longer period.

The final group created a presentation through posters on **domestic and child abuse**, with the hope that it will raise awareness and educate students that it is not something that should be tolerated and how they can seek support.

The students found this project very interesting and it gave them a chance to think, speak and listen to the opinions of others. They would like to roll out this project across a whole year because by doing it they can see that it develops their research skills and helps them to communicate very difficult issues in a sensitive way.



EDVE





Students raising awareness about controversial issues.









Let's end prejudice together - St. Luke's

PREJUNTLE



St Luke's is a primary school based on the Isle of Dogs in East London attended by nearly 400 pupils. The school has a very diverse intake, with a majority from Christian backgrounds and a large percentage of Bangladeshi, Indian and African students. St Luke's wanted to be involved in the *Start the Change* project because it is always looking for opportunities to work with external partners to develop their student's understanding of shared values within the community and globally. As the school is very diverse, it is important to develop inclusivity and understanding among students and teachers.



Interfaith Understanding

The school project team came up with the idea of a project called Interfaith Understanding – they wanted the students to gain a greater understanding of the multicultural society that they live in. In addition to knowing about the stereotypes and prejudices that continue to exist within their communities. **They wanted to ensure that students have a safe space to voice their concerns and experiences.**

They involved Year 5 (9-10 years) students in this project. At this age students show a limited understanding of issues such as racism, sexism and homophobia. Through delivering a scheme of work that tackles some of these areas during their Religious Education lessons, children had the opportunity to reflect on these issues and develop a greater understanding of the importance of working together to end prejudices.

During a series of RE lessons, they explored topics around interfaith respect and understanding. For example developing students' ideas on religious difference, discussing the idea of identity and the values and identity within the community.

As the project progressed children showed high levels of engagement with the topics and issues raised, and were developing critical thinking skills as well as empathy for others.

The project has also led to a developing partnership with Walton-On-Trent primary school based around global learning, in the Midlands. The school successfully linked this project to another project through HEC's Kindred Spirits, thus enriching both projects! Developing partnerships and sharing of experiences, has enhanced their understanding of interfaith respect.

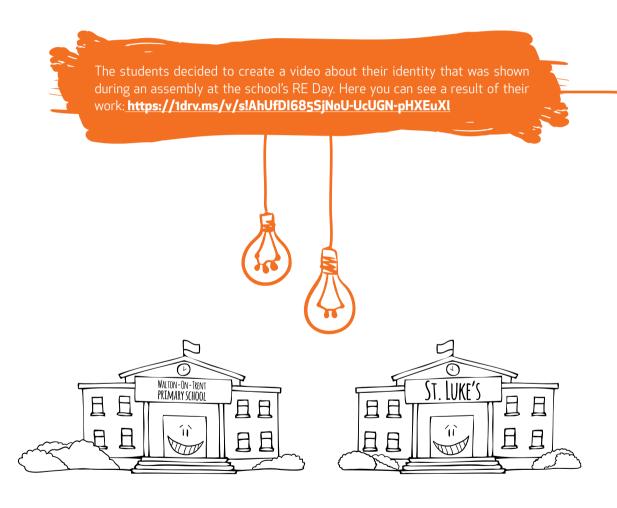
This project had an impact on the whole school because it linked so strongly with the school's values. This is why it formed a part of the school's RE day. This project impacted the planning for a half term in R.E. to include global learning and interfaith understanding alongside developing knowledge of British Values.

Projects like this are vital for children who live in a multicultural society and although it is a peaceful and collaborative environment it is important to maintain, celebrate and share that in their wider community. Therefore, there are plans to build on the work completed this year and to ensure that this is integrated within the work they do in RE.

Students shared their opinion about these activities and confirmed one more time that schools need more projects like this:

It has been exciting to work with Walton-On-Trent primary and learning about their school which is very different to ours.

In my opinion, community is when people of a neighbourhood, city or even country come together as Christians, Muslims, Hindus or any religion to discuss the problems and look for solutions together.



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Painting our identities

Secondary School
Swanlea



It's important to talk about identity

The aim of this project was to work with Year7 students and explore their understanding of identity and community both in school and beyond through art lessons. For them it was important to focus on identity and the duality or multiplicity of identity in the UK, especially among diaspora communities. As the school has a majority of working class and Bangladeshi students who can be from quite insular communities it was important for the students to learn about different cultures through art.

Over the course of 6 art lessons, 30 students explored identity. They looked at tribes - What makes a tribe? Could the class be a tribe? Or the school? They reflected on alter-egos- What parts of their character do they show to the world? What parts do they hide? Who would they be if they didn't hide?

The students created small sketches showing opposing parts of their own personalities. This led on to the topic of prejudice and discrimination. Using different art pieces as a stimuli, students were asked to think about how people are portrayed in art and the judgements we might make- Is the person rich or poor? Happy or sad? What makes up that person's identity?

Students are often hesitant to speak about different issues, but the use of visuals helped to prompt students to discuss and reflect on what elements in their lives form their identity. Students created a final art piece which combined a self-portrait sketch with water colours showing the different parts of their identity. Students drew images of what they love, for example sports, flowers, books, games consoles, British flag, the crown and even their favourite burger!

The students enjoyed learning this topic and have been discussing the idea of identity during their lunch hours with students from other classes. It has pushed them to better understand people from different backgrounds, and the female students have become a lot more open about sometimes feeling different and realising that this is alright.





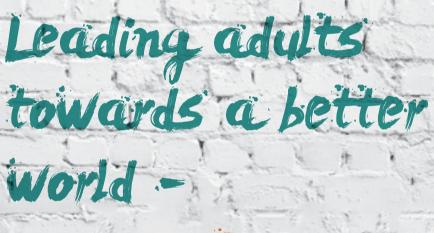


Exploring identity in the art lessons









Virginia Primary School



Virginia Primary School is a one form entry primary school (5-11years) in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Tower Hamlets is one of the most deprived boroughs in the UK with almost a third of the population of Bangladeshi heritage. The school wanted to engage with the Start the Change project in order to find new ways to deal with controversial issues in the classroom.

The aim of the project was to develop the peer-to-peer voices and

The aim of the project was to develop the peer-to-peer voices and opportunities by creating and sharing safe spaces. At Virginia Primary School the *Start the Change* project involved Years 5 and 6 pupils and the Rights Respecting Council, a group of school students who promote the UN Convention of the Rights of Children across the school and the community. These students were trained as facilitators who could lead conversations on controversial issues. Their training also included a session on leadership and critical media literacy.

It doesn't matter how young you are, you can make a difference

The students watched 'Malala introducing the World's Largest Lesson' and 'The World's Largest Lesson 2016 - with thanks to Sir Ken Robinson and Emma Watson'. The students were asked to think about the problems facing their community. There were many different answers from littering and pollution to poverty and homelessness. This led on to thinking about what young people can do about these problems, as it is always important to highlight the impact that young people can make in this world. Answers were creative and bold - for example creating a gardening club, using recycled paper in class, creating signs to stop littering, raising money for a local charity.

The school project team then invited in a speaker from a company called the Revolution Hive to motivate and inspire the children to know that **they can make a difference and that they can lead people, including adults towards a better world.** Following the visit, the speaker expressed how much he enjoyed working with children at Virginia and how the Rights Respecting Culture that is engrained within the ethos of the school is helping the children to develop into reflective local and global citizens.

Following these discussions and training, these students visited other classes to facilitate conversations. The facilitators decided that they should discuss the topic of "Animals should not be eaten by humans" in sessions with other students, in order to give the students an opportunity to practise discussing a controversial issue in an effective way. The discussion was then opened up to allow other issues to be discussed.

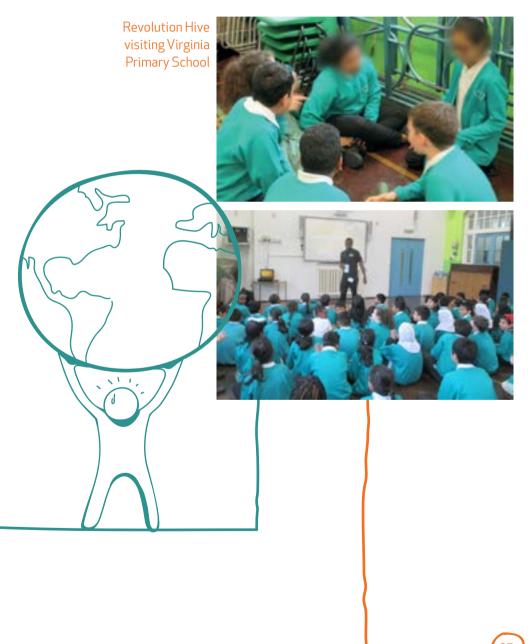
The classes involved in the project have both improved their understanding of the issues that world faces today. They are now able to discuss controversial issues in an effective way. They are also better prepared to think critically when confronted with what they might see in newspapers, the internet or social media to ensure that they get given truthful and reliable information. The students are enthusiastic to continue the project next year and beyond. It has led to empowerment of the facilitators to help others raise awareness of the benefits and dangers of information being produced from a variety of sources online.



As a result of the project, staff are aware of strategies to aid the discussion of controversial topics and children are aware of a variety of global issues. (Lead teacher on the Start the Change project.)

We can go and help our families discuss these issues! (Student)

It doesn't matter how young you are, you can make a difference. (Student)



Starting the change in CROATIA

The Start the Change project in Croatia has resulted in many different projects in 14 schools across the country:

Primary School Tomaš Goričanec, Economics and
Tourism School Daruvar, Mixed Industrial-Trade School Karlovac,
Primary School Dubrava, Primary School Sveti Matej, Grammar
School Beli Manastir, Grammar School Matija Mesić, Grammar
School Bernardin Frankopan, Primary School Ivan Meštrović,
Grammar School Pula, Primary School Trpinja, Health and
Veterinary School Dr. Andrija Štampar Vinkovci, Technical School
Nikola Tesla Vukovar, Grammar School Županja.

Students of the Croatian schools identified challenges they face due to mutual differences and this helped teachers to find out more about what matters to their students, and what they would like to change in school and outside the school, in their local communities.

Students and teachers designed different volunteering projects like charity initiatives, creative awareness raising campaigns on topics that matter to students, peer workshops and many others. The purpose of these projects was also to bring students closer to each other, to have a good time together and to overcome their mutual differences. In this way they learned about each other and about differences that exist in their local communities, but also they brought joy to different groups of people and found out that they all 'speak the same language'. Many new friendships were formed and new cooperations established and students realized that together they can be the changemakers in their schools and their communities.

Primary School in Motovun Motovur:

> **Grammar School Pula** Pula





Third Shift is
now everyone's
Fayourite shift
Tomaš Goričanec
Primary School





Tomaš Goričanec Primary School from Mala Subotica participated in the Start the Change project because they were already implementing a number of activities aimed at raising awareness among students about the importance of valuing diversity, tolerance and active citizenship. It is precisely because of their commitment to recognising and celebrating diversity that this school was named the School Philanthropist, together with other 10 schools in Croatia. This is a rural school in the Međimurje County, attended by 515 students, out of which 205 are Roma national minority students. In addition to differences in nationality and ethnicity, there is also a significant difference in the socio-economic status of students, which is why a lot of attention is given to developing projects and activities around accepting and valuing diversities.

In order to hear the students' opinions on this topic, a survey was conducted in which students expressed their opinions, identified problems and suggested solutions. The survey showed the students' desire to stop disagreements among them based on their differences.



Third Shift

The first step in launching new activities was to involve students in the work of the Subotica's local volunteer organization (SOVA). Their aim was to reduce divisions and highlight the importance of mutual acceptance and collaboration through participating together in projects. During the volunteers' and Student Council meeting, young people exchanged ideas about activities to be implemented within the *Third Shift* and the following ones were selected – IT for the Retirees, Knitting Competition, First Aid Lecture, Making Easter Decorations, Cooking Meals and Sale, Night Sky Observation, Board Games, Photography Workshops, Lecture by the Parents who Work the Third Shift. All of these activities were united under the project name *Third Shift* which aimed at **connecting the local community and enriching its social life through joint activities for students, school staff, volunteers, representatives of local associations and community residents.**

Students were invited to create a logo and a slogan for this project by participating in a competition: **Bring the idea on the paper and take the pizza away!** The Commission unanimously declared the winners who generously shared pizza with their classmates.

The next step was to spread the word about this project in as creative and successful way as possible. **Media group and volunteers chose the guerrilla marketing strategy.** Given the fact that the new local shopping centre was advertising themselves by putting a large number two in the area, the project *Third Shift* put a large number 3 in front of the school and municipality. They achieved what they wanted – citizens of local community were asking questions: Where did that come from? What does that number mean? And so the discussion about the Third Shift started.

The Third Shift event was held at the school premises during one day, different activities were conducted in parallel with many participants from local community and on this day the school was filled with laughter, children and adults, and positive atmosphere. The final project event made possible to see first-hand the impact of students uniting to create change, when diversity became a source of creativity, and mutual respect overcame disagreements.



Guerrilla marketing strategy



Winners of the competition for the best logo and slogan





 $Cooperation\ of\ the\ students\ and\ the\ Subotica's\ volunteer\ organization$



Economics and Tourism School Daruvar has been around for 90 years and has more than 400 students. Even before getting involved in the Start the Change project, this school had encouraged students towards mutual cooperation and contributing to positive social change. One of acknowledgements that the school received in 2015 for its work was to be the first Peacebuilding School that received the Peacebuilding Award Krunoslav Sukić awarded by Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights - Osijek. By receiving this Award, the Centre wanted to encourage education for peace and highlight the contribution the school community can do for building the culture of non-violence. The school is currently carrying out several projects in the field of civic education. "Our students are not only the target group in all projects, they are also the main educators of other students and promoters of the above mentioned ideas" says the project team leader.



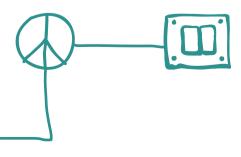
Together for Inclusive Society

The project *Together for Inclusive Society* was created as a part of the *Start the Change* project. **The aim was to reduce the problems of social inequality and exclusion of individuals or groups.** The school cooperated with several associations through this project, this included well known associations in Croatia like GONG, Forum for Freedom in Education, HERMES and the Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights in Osijek.

A research on students' attitudes and knowledge regarding differences and forms of discrimination in the school and society was conducted using methods of questionnaires and focus groups. The research results were reviewed and analysed, and then both teachers and students, members of the project team, participated in training to build their capacities for implementing workshops on these valuable topics.

Close to the end of the year, the project team prepared a questionnaire to investigate attitudes and knowledge of students in all other classes focussing this time on their perspectives on social inequality and exclusion of individuals or groups in their school or local community. All participants were presented with the results of the research, and then students attended workshops implemented by their peers while teachers attended lectures by their peers. The workshops covered different topics like prejudice and stereotypes, acceptance of differences, and media literacy. **Students had opportunity to be a "teacher", as 15 of them independently conducted workshops with their peers.** A final survey was conducted in the end of school year, this time among the students who participated in the activities, to evaluate any changes in attitudes and knowledge, and also to see if any competences had developed.

It is important to ensure that students are committed and engaged in these very important and often neglected topics. Discussing controversial issues takes a lot of time, energy and effort but this is required to develop skills such as the ability to listen, empathy, resilience and critical thinking.



Students working on raising awareness of their differences and similarities



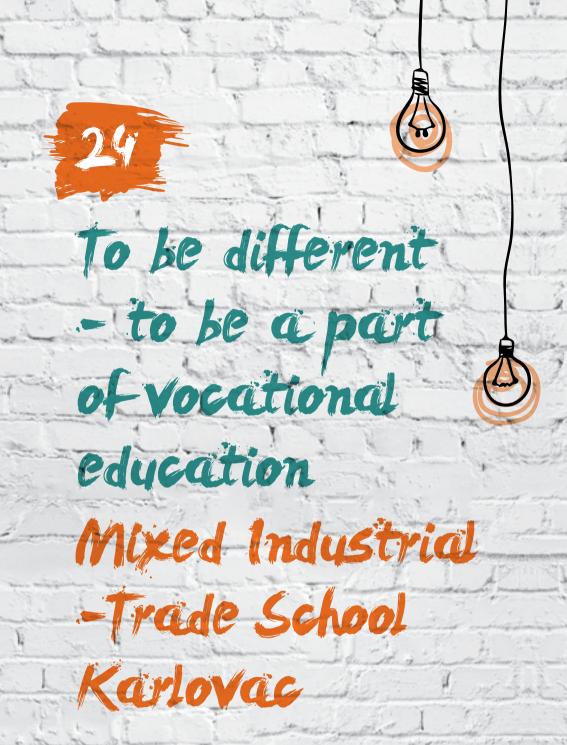




School board dedicated to the Start the Change project









MIOŠ high school changed its name and location throughout years, and finally settled in the very centre of the city, and introduced various educational programs aimed at crafts and industrial occupations.

Students from across the Karlovac County bring vast richness in various aspects (religious, socio-economic, and cultural) due to its geographic position, closeness of neighbouring countries, natural characteristics, the economy, and the quality of life. The school has 386 students, grouped into 23 classes. They are being educated for one of 14 three-year professional programmes, and 3 four-year professional programmes. Among the three-year programmes, there are three educational programmes for students with disabilities. There is diversity among students and the teaching staff. Professors, engineers, expert teachers, teachers of general and vocational subjects all give their best in their work to motivate students to develop their potential.



Two Sides of Diversity

By being involved in the *Start the Change* project teachers and students were able to develop a common language/communication tool which made it easier to work together. Project leaders created workshops under the title the Two Sides of Diversity to facilitate this communication.

The goal of the Two Sides of Diversity was to empower teachers to talk with students about diversity, as well as about solving problems which might arise from differences which exist. Furthermore, **the goal is to lead students towards mutual acceptance** and engaging with diversity, as well as to increase the sense of responsibility for themselves and for others.

The project started with the project team conducting a cycle of five workshops with the head teachers of the first and second classes (of all vocational programmes) within six months. The workshop topics were: identity, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and different roles in society. Each workshop was firstly conducted with head teachers through which they were introduced to topics and materials for the workshops. During the workshops, head teachers took on the roles of the students, refreshed what they already knew, but also learned something new and exchanged experiences. Then, they conducted the same workshops in their classrooms with the students in the upcoming months. Their impressions regarding the workshops were different and valuable. Even though the starting point was the same, all the classes experienced certain topics in a different way.

Beside workshops, students were involved in various activities to enhance the value of diversity and pride during the whole school year. Within the Week of Vocational Education in September they organized *Open Door Days* under the name *Skills for Tomorrow*. **Their goal was to show the benefits of vocational education, and stress to students and parents that this is a viable route for their future.** Their guest Davor Gobac, a famous Croatian rock singer, helped out with the message for the youth:

Everyone looks up to tycoons, politicians, those who put away enormous sums of money, and are forgetting that the happiest life is when we do the jobs we love and know how to do it. Why to be a painter? Because there is a lack of painters in the market, and if you are a good painter, you'll probably earn a lot of money.

They also attended the Fair of High Schools in Karlovac, where they pointed out how it is to be of a different, vocational orientation.

In December they organized a Christmas Fair with a humanitarian theme. The aim was to collect funding for students of low socio-economic status. The students and professors demonstrated creativity and altruism in this activity.

The students also had the opportunity to hear more about the importance of volunteering from the project manager of local youth association Carpe Diem and two students participating in the youth mobility programme.

Teachers of this school say they are proud of their students because they live differently among themselves but they are ready to prove every day that it is worthwhile to be different, and to be a part of the vocational education sector.

Davor Gobac in Mixed Industrial-Trade School



Students are watching the Dutch movie Are you sorry? about intolerance and disapproval among young people



Fair of High Schools in Karlovac – presenting how it is to be of a different









Primary School Dubrava is a part of Zagrebačka County and has 447 students in the central school and in three district schools.

Diversity among students in this school comes with huge richness and challenges in everyday work. Students themselves state that they perceive differences in physical appearance, social status and behaviour. As a school that is attended by a number of students from foster families and national minorities, they recognized the importance of participating in the project Start the Change.



1 Can Do It

Firstly, a survey was conducted among the students to think about the differences they are surrounded by, their daily challenges and solutions they think could help. Students agreed that involving them in different workshops, outside of the classrooms, with the aim of spending time together, getting to know each other and challenging misconceptions to break down prejudice is the best way of working together on tackling negativity and celebrating diversity. They united their ideas under the project *I Can Do It*. The name on its own sends a message to all the students that **everyone should start from themselves and their actions when it comes to acceptance of diversity and challenging prejudice. The goal of the project was to raise awareness amongst students and empower them to create change in the society. Many activities, workshops and meetings in the kindergarten, local hunting society and retirement home have been carried out at school with this same goal.**

The project team and students decided to go a step further in challenging prejudice – they visited a home for people with mental health issues. People who are admitted into these homes are some of the most stigmatized and marginalized in society. They are often ignored by their local communities and lead isolated lives. The teachers were unsure about how students would react to meeting people with mental health issues; however, they felt that these opportunities were key in empowering students to respect all members of their community. Firstly, the students learnt about the different types of mental illness and the impact this can have on the individual and their families. Secondly, the teachers ensured that these issues were made understandable and made relevant for the students. The students were apprehensive about going to the Home, but once they engaged with the Home's beneficiaries, it was easier for students to feel at ease and communicate with everyone there. The students created Easter cards for beneficiaries during the workshop and brought them gifts to help break the ice.

Teachers described the meeting: "Students and protégées started to socialize, talk and play social games together. The space was resonating with talking, laughter and a positive atmosphere. An hour passed by in a moment, nobody wanted to go home, and we left smiling faces behind. Everyone is anticipating the next meeting!"

Think if you also have some prejudice towards certain groups of people, those that you consider different to yourself. Think whether you behave towards them the same way you want others to behave towards you. We are all different in some way.

Playing cards with new friends in a home for people with mental health issues



Cleaning up the school environment











They are inviting you to share positivity and like diversity"

— Primary School

Syeti Matej



Primary School Sveti Matej in Viškovo is the biggest school in Primorsko-goranska County. It has 920 students in 39 classes. It is situated in the industrial zone of Viškovo which is characterized by intensive settlements of people from different parts of Croatia, as well as from abroad. Such a big number of students also brings diversity in various aspects: cultural, socio-economic, ethnic, religious, educational status of parents and educational possibilities of students.

After becoming part of the project they started "a storm in their brains" and brainstormed a project Share Positivity, Like Diversity.

As the name of the project itself states, goals and values which they want to achieve and develop by implementing this project are the development of social skills important for interaction with peers, encouraging cooperation and mutual respect among children, and increasing closeness and value of diversity among peers. The project Share Positivity, Like Diversity consisted of several activities that were implemented during different subjects and outside of the classrooms.



The Socialization Walk Together to the Goal

Do school children socialize enough? And what is the quality of their engagement? Are they willing and able to cooperate and solve tasks if they are in a group of randomly chosen class mates? The socialization walk *Together to the Goal* was created to bring together students in the fifth grade to socialize and work together regardless of differences in intellect, physique and interests.

The Walk activity took around one hour and comprised of a number of steps which encouraged critical thinking, problem-solving and team building. The steps were:

- 1. Group formation this required students to put together a jigsaw puzzle of families of different races.
- 2. Solving the task a crossword puzzle was given to each group which had a message and concept promoted by this project.
- 3. The Walk and Solution finding after the activities were completed each group created an overview of the activity and presented it to their peers during an IT class.



Starting a change in the maths classes

With the goal of refreshing the maths classes, the teacher engaged students by giving them various motivational tasks. A motivational task would show up on the classroom board several times through the semester. It was not compulsory and students would solve it on voluntary basis. They could hand in the solutions within the period of two weeks. The students' goodwill was valued and each attempt and solution was taken into account. The goal was to stimulate students' thinking, to express freely, develop ideas and strategies which point to the possibility of approaching a problem in different ways. The most interesting and creative solutions were displayed on the classroom board.

Example of the mathematical task: Write a concept (or draw a picture) which you associate with the *Start the Change* project and map it axially symmetrically with respect to the chosen direction as the axis of symmetry.

Starting a change in the Croatian language classes

During Croatian language classes, students dramatized the folk poem *Mara's Crown* and created a new creative outcome of the play in accordance with the *Start the Change* project. The folk poem ends with Mara's rejection of Maurin known as the Black Moro. **Students changed the relationship between the main characters to promote peace and tolerance regardless of the colour of their skin, their nationality, religion or race.** Many turned the dramatic conflict into a love story with

a fairy-tale ending. The students had a lot of fun breaking down prejudice and participated actively in the creation of more accepting relationships in society. They did this by working in groups to write texts according to a given literary template, preparing scenography, costumes, dolls, theatre posters and performing the play. After the play, the students were tasked with reshaping the poem into a comic book, and created the comic during their media classes.

Project's anthem

The students received key terms from which they created the lyrics of the project anthem during the Croatian language classes. The teacher collected students' creations and composed the school anthem out of the best ideas.

THE ANTHEM OF THE SCHOOL PROJECT SHARE POSITIVITY, LIKE DIVERSITY

Start a change
My school is a friend to everyone,
Big and small,
Known, special,
It is the pride of our region,
All have equal rights,
Creativity joins with the mind.
Omit the diversity in play,
Find yourself in togetherness,
Accept black and white,
Give your hand, help,
Let love and hope prevail,
We need life without prejudice!
Breaking fences is not easy,
Everyone can make an effort,

Not to go alone through life, It is easier when you belong to someone.

To build bridges of friendship,

Move, let's change the world,
Start the sparkle of tolerance,
Colour the world with colours,
Listen, connect with others,
SHARE POSITIVITY, LIKE DIVERSITY!







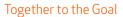
We hope that you found inspiration among these amazing ideas for your work with the students. We are greeting you with the students' message "Move, let's change the world..."

For further inspiration listen to the music of the poem they recorded and the photo gallery of their activities:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQDjf0lBFQM









27

Exploring
different cultures
goes "through
the stomach"Grammar School
Beli Manastir





Grammar School Beli Manastir is situated in the Baranja region where it is the only grammar school. It is a small school attended by 107 students in 7 classes. Taking into consideration that the population of Baranja is of Croatian, Serbian and Hungarian nationality, the same national diversity exists in the school as well. The other key differences are religion and social background.

The research was conducted among students in the form of focus groups as the project team wanted identify students' needs coming out of mentioned differences, especially of those they might not be aware of. The students formed several groups in which they discussed and made conclusions in regard to certain questions (e.g. what are the most significant differences among the students? How do the differences among sexes, nationalities, religions, economic status and other differences impact the school? Are there any emerging conflicts in the classrooms due to the differences? etc.). The project team came to the conclusion that students are generally satisfied with the relationship towards the differences in the school after having implemented the research.



Getting to know each other

The research also highlighted that the students are aware of the differences among themselves which are based on their national, religious, sexual, and social background, etc. However, the students do not consider these differences when forming friendships, and rather focus on similar interests and hobbies. **The students also emphasized that demographic differences which are usually mentioned, have less impact on the relationship among the individuals and that the "chemistry", personality and similarities are more important to them when bonding with their peers.** The students themselves confirmed that they develop mutual acceptance and respect through mutual cooperation, spending time together and having support from the school staff.

After having spent almost four years with my classmates, I can say that meeting some of them influenced some of my attitudes, gave me the opportunity to see certain situations from a different perspective, and get to know some of them better. (a student, Grammar school Beli Manastir)

Although the project team accepted what was said during the research phase, it was also acknowledged that embracing diversity is an ongoing issue particularly in such a multicultural school. Based on this, the project team developed new ideas to create opportunities for students to getting to know each other and work together as a team to organise activities in their local communities.

The school has been organising volunteering activities in the local children's home Klasje for five years, along with other volunteering activities. The project team leader stated that they wanted to connect the existing volunteering topics with the topics which encourage empathy and acceptance of diversity within the project. Therefore, they organized a workshop *From a Different Angle* with the children of the Home to encourage the students to think about the existence of different perspectives, and to raise awareness of how easy it is to judge and how difficult it is to understand.

The students also worked with the Baranja Ethno Heritage Centre to create posters and write papers about Baranja's heritage within the curricula of certain subjects, particularly Geography. Once again, they looked into the history, and researched the present in order to celebrate the beauty of Baranja which consists of beautiful sceneries, people and traditions.

The students also participated in different activities which included cooking, tasting the food, and writing down the recipes. Everyone involved was delighted. The result of the exploration of other cultures through their cuisine was The World's



Cookbook. It consists of various recipes and the interesting facts about Czech, Roman, Japanese, Albanian, Jewish and Slovenian and many other cuisines. Flicking through this cookbook, the students felt like they were having a quick tour around the world.

The World's Cookbook as well as other activities implemented within the Start the Change project were presented by the students during the **School Day Celebration**. The event was full of songs, dances, and positive stories. It was enriched by the students of the Hungarian nationality who presented a part of their heritage by performing a Hungarian dance.

This school is an amazing example of teachers and students of different nationalities living and working together, knowing that they can learn from each other, that different cultures make the everyday life more interesting and more colourful, and that everyone have the right to foster their tradition without denying the same right to other people.

While we are waiting for their cookbook to be published, try the activity out with your students and make a cookbook. Explore other cultures in the most tasteful way that there is.











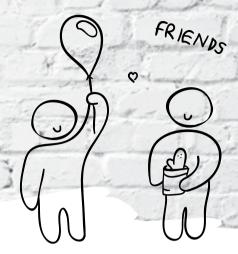
Initiators, not

observers

Primary School in

Motovun*





Primary School in Motovun is one of the subsidiary schools of the Primary School "Vladimir Nazor" in Pazin. It is a small school attended by around 60 students, and the staff in this school believe it is important to teach their students how to be active citizens from an early age.

Their newest project is called *Be My Friend*. The project was created in cooperation with the Adult's Home *Motovun* which is based in the area of Motovun municipality, and its main service is to care for adults with mental health issues. As the name of the project states, it was created with the goal to develop friendship among students and beneficiaries of the Home for adults *Motovun* through activities which would contribute to the improvement of quality of life on both sides.

Students would spend their free time as active citizens – especially by stepping away from the modern technologies, and the Home's beneficiaries would increase the feeling of usefulness, acceptance, and self-respect – says the school pedagogue.

Be My Friend

Through various workshops students spent their time with the beneficiaries of the Home doing together activities useful for the whole community. The activities included: raking the leaves and landscaping around the Home, preparing desserts together, decorating the Home for the upcoming Christmas holidays, making cards and decorations, helping with landscaping and gardening in spring, helping with the care of animals, and walking and spending time together. Workshops which were held in the school included all its students, and one more activity gathered everyone together in constructing a couch and table out of wooden pallets, painting the tires, games in the open ("school" games and Twister), setting up the swings and other adequate equipment in the school yard and spending the time together.

It is important to emphasize that all the activities were implemented mutually by the students and the Home's beneficiaries. Other than spending time together and developing friendships, there are also other positive outcomes of this project. The visible ones include landscaping and equipment in the school yard, but the important benefits are often the ones one cannot see. The students developed a sense of agency and commitment to improve their local community, to contribute to the feeling of acceptance and self-respect of the people who are often not accepted due to ignorance and prejudice. It is hoped that these students will be changemakers in their local communities, those who will break stereotypes, and show by example how to be initiators of positive change in the local community, country, and world.

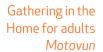
It is never too early to develop the consciousness of active citizenship because your students or your children are the one who will one day be initiators of positive change in the community. And educators have the power and responsibility to encourage young people to be initiators, and not only observers.



^{*}This school is not included in the project *Start the Change*. We only wanted to inspire you, as well as it inspired us, to do similar activities.







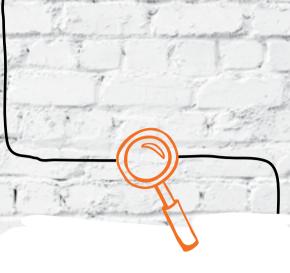








Different is cool
cul(ture)
Matija Mesić
Grammar School



Matija Mesić Grammar School in Slavonski Brod has been preparing students for life for the last 100 years. This school in eastern part of Croatia is one of the largest grammar schools in the country, and each year it enrols 9 classes of students. Students actively participate in the school life, and are constantly contributing to the implementation of various curricular and extracurricular activities.

Due to the awareness that the school is a large county school where diversity among the students is part of everyday life, employees and students have recognized the Start the Change project as an opportunity to commit themselves to the topic of diversity. A survey was conducted among 57 students from all four years as a first step in raising awareness of diversity issues. The results showed that students recognized physical appearance, academic success and dressing style as distinct differences. Given that the survey confirmed that acceptance of differences is a topic that needs to be constantly discussed, school's Young Journalists group immediately took upon themselves to create a new, better and more creative Poisonous Feather with the main topic of diversity.



Poisonous Feather

Have you heard of the *Poisonous Feather?* It is a student newspaper which has been published for fourteen years by students of Matija Mesić Grammar School. The value of this student newspaper has also been recognized by professional journalists. *Poisonous Feather* was awarded as the best high school newspaper in Croatia in the academic year 2016/2017 according to the selection by Croatian national daily paper *Jutarnji list*.



Young Journalists in this school talk diligently, explore and spend hours preparing for each new release to make it even more interesting, creative, and better than the previous ones in order to include all the topics they consider important. They recognized the importance of the Start the Change project and the topics it covers, and they decided to promote values, understanding and acceptance of the diversities they are surrounded by in the new release of the

Poisonous Feather. Students did research, interviewed teachers and students, thought it through, and sent out the message that diversity is enriching, and an advantage that builds a better culture.

In addition to journalistic texts, beautiful photos on the same subject were also a part of the paper's new edition. A contest for the best photo was announced under the same name Different is cool cul[ture] with the aim to collect as many photos as possible with the message that **being different is ok** and that it enriches us. Some of them found their place in the school's newspaper, and all the photos were presented at an exhibition which was also a part of the project activities. Everyone who attended the official presentation of the school newspaper at the town's library witnessed that young journalists, graphic artists and photographers had done the excellent work.

Start the Change project team also planned other activities which continued in the direction set by the Poisonous Feather like establishing a debate club, organization of the educational workshops by the school's volunteering club "Carpe diem", socializing and exchanging experiences with students from another school where diversity is also part of everyday life.

We hope that a copy of the *Poisonous Feather* will find its way to you, to encourage you personally to think about diversity or to give you a new idea about how to talk about it.

"Poisonous Feather"







The winning photography from Ivan Meštrović Primary School



Its important what kind of human you are, not your profession-Bernardin Frankopan Grammar School



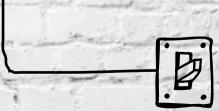






Bernardin Frankopan Grammar School in Ogulin is going to celebrate its 100th anniversary next year and it educates students in two grammar school programmes, general and foreign-language, and in three vocational programmes: Technician in Tourism and Management, Economist and Salesman. This school is constantly implementing projects to encourage students not only to learn academic and vocational knowledge but also to develop their social and civic competences. Alongside the everyday challenges that high schools have in their work, the additional challenge for the school staff is to unite 335 students in 19 classes and 5 different programmes into joint activities to reduce students' prejudice against students enrolled in other programmes. Within the Croatian educational system different secondary schools are usually assigned different levels of prestige by the society at large: prestigious four-year grammar schools, less prestigious four-year vocational schools and the least prestigious threeyear vocational schools.

The research conducted with third and fourth grade students in form of focus groups at the beginning of last year proved that this challenge really is a crucial one.



All for One, One for All

As a response to the research results, the idea of a project All for One, One for All was developed. The aim of the project is to have students of this school support each other, that their different academic tracks and professions are not a source of prejudice, but a source of a curiosity to get to know each other, a source of cooperation, and identification of what is common for them and what gives them the strength to work together to create a better community in which they live. The school has started organizing various common activities with aim to raise awareness of students regarding any prejudice they have about each other.

Students celebrated the second *European Week of Skills in Vocational Education and Training* under the motto: *Discover your talents*. The teachers were especially delighted due to the students' desire to organize a large portion of the activities themselves. The students and teachers visited a company in their local area, and some traineeship companies came to visit the school. In the end, students made a video with the teacher's help to present all of the activities in which they have participated.

Particularly important was a workshop in which students from the first grades participated: the task was to identify talents, skills and knowledge necessary for each of the academic tracks in the school, like for example – What is necessary for a good salesman, a technician in tourism and management, an economist and a gymnasium graduate. This activity led students to the conclusion how all professions are important and necessary in the community, and that same skills and knowledge are common as necessary to all of them: communication skills, computer competences, foreign languages, expert knowledge, etc.

The students got involved together in collecting plastic bottle caps within the activity *Providing the more expensive medicine with collecting the plastic caps*, helping the Association for the diagnosed with leukaemia and lymphoma Croatia.

A special tree was decorated in the school before the Christmas holidays – *The Christmas Tree of Changes* – which was decorated by the students with messages of encouragement for the mutual acceptance, thus being aware that the change depends on themselves.

The quote by one student maybe best describes the benefits of these activities: It's important what kind of a human you are, and not what is your profession.

Do research yourselves on differences students notice among themselves, the opinion they have on the recognized differences, what they would like to change in their community – their attitudes might surprise you. And then encourage them to work on it – when they feel safe, students like the opportunity to talk about the things that affect them, they only need a support to help them start the change.

Students and teacher created logo for the project All for One, One for All



Students celebrated the second European Week of Skills in Vocational Education and Training



HUG

APPRECIATE





Celebrating diversity Ivan Mestrović Primary School



Ivan Meštrović Primary School in Zagreb, has been operating since 1969. The school leadership have invested a lot of time and effort to embed key values into the school ethos, because they want students to leave with both the knowledge and values to lead a successful and happy life. There are 688 students attending the school in 2017 and 2018 school year. Around fifty students with disabilities are being educated within the prescribed specific program, and six students with special needs and mental health problems are enrolled in a separate class. The school implements different projects and activities related to topics such as promotion of diversity, tolerance and active citizenship. They wanted to join Start the Change project to strengthen further promotion of democratic values, human rights and intercultural understanding, but also to encourage students to even more participate actively in the community, and in that way to reduce prejudice and stereotypes. As the school project team states, the emphasis on these activities is on integration and not on assimilation "because cultural differences allow better understanding and tolerance in society".

Before joining the project, teachers and students took part in research project on any challenges they may face from the differences existing between the students. The questionnaires were filled by teachers and focus groups were conducted with the students, and what was discovered was that the most significant differences existed between students with disabilities and rest of the student body. Students also expressed their desire and commitment to recognise differences as a way to broaden their minds and learn better to connect with everyone among and around them.

Round Cubes

Given that teamwork is necessary for initiating a change, it was decided that students, teachers and parents would all be included in the project activities under the title Round Cubes.

After implementing the workshops with teachers (about mediation, stereotypes and prejudice), it was time to work with parents - they participated in the workshop about online security and media culture.

The school then hosted students from Bulgaria - they held several workshops about their country and culture to other students. For them, it was an amazing opportunity to discuss diversity.

Some students visited a mosque within the outdoor lessons of Religious Education in the first semester and some students visited a Greek Catholic and a Baptist Church.

Round cubes are not like the cubes we are used to, like the cubes we imagine when someone talks about them. Still, that does not make them less valuable, less willing to play and to be accepted. That does not mean that they should be made square to fit in better and be more similar to those we like to call normal. We should accept them exactly the way they are and recognize the beauty in that diversity. Wouldn't it be boring if all the cubes were the same shape and colour?

Students volunteering within the school's volunteer club Meštri

The students involved in the photo club *Meštri* got involved in the photo contest *Different is Cool* organized by Matija Mesić High School Slavonski Brod.

All the students and school staff collected food and hygiene items at the beginning of the academic year. School volunteers then organized, packed and donated them to the children's charity organization Little Dragon.

Volunteers also participated in three volunteering activities. Firstly, they celebrated International Volunteer Day on December 5th by volunteering in the association *Little Dragon*. Traditional Christmas workshops were held as a part of their long-term cooperation with Children's Hospital *Goljak*. Students made Christmas decorations

and cards. "We would like to have them come here again because we had a nice time together, and they were very kind guests", said the children after spending the time together.

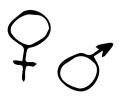
Several days later, school volunteers together with volunteers from the association A Smile for Everyone visited the hearing impaired children in the Educational Centre Slava Raškaj. The meeting started with getting to know the participants: children and grown-ups communicated their names using sign language, and then they sowed wheat together. The volunteers then sang Christmas songs and read stories to the protégés which their teachers translated into the sign language.

Celebration of the World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day is celebrated in the school every year because there are five students with Down syndrome. The week before March 21, students had opportunity to take a look at the board in the school's hallway where students with Down syndrome got to showcase their photographs and written work. Their teacher also prepared a presentation about Down syndrome including all the things the children with Down syndrome love to do – this highlighted the similarities between the children. This presentation had an impact on all the students who spent their afternoon and lunch break discussing the presentation. On March 21 all students came to school wearing odd socks (as an international sign of support for people with Down syndrome) and visiting their new friends in the other classes.

One class visited their friends in the special classroom where they made Easter cards together. The result of this gathering were beautiful cards created through joint efforts, as well as the time spent together. It reminded the students once again how we are all different in something, and so similar at the same time. Students agreed on plans for more visits to each other.

Volunteering in the Association Little Dragon







I see a human,
not their socioeconomic status Grammar School
Pula





Grammar School Pula, located in Istria, is a school with a long tradition—it has just celebrated 70 years of teaching in the Croatian language, and 110 years of its existence. Today the school is attended by 700 students educated in three grammar programmes: general, natural sciences and linguistic.

The leaders of the project teams emphasise importance of school values - respecting human rights, freedoms and active citizenship among students in the Grammar School Pula. There are a number of extracurricular activities, including classes of civic education, an active debate club and numerous volunteering activities which encourage students to become active in their community. Although the school actively participates in numerous projects in the field of human rights and civic competences, in Start the Change project they recognized the possibility to raise awareness about the socio-economic differences among students, as well as to reflect on the need for a mutual respect, regardless of someone's material status. The socio-economic differences were the ones that students previously pointed out as the most present during the conducted interviews, so the project team put a focus on them. It is interesting that students recognized the presence of prejudice towards the students at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum. So students from a more privileged background and those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds - were both found to be targets of gossip and exclusion by majority of peers.

1 See a Hyman

The school implemented a project called *I See a Human* with the goal of directing and empowering teachers to talk to students about economic differences, as well as to solve problems that arise from those differences. The project team states that among other things, they wanted to encourage students to raise awareness of prejudices and stereotypes that arise from distinct differences, as well as to increase a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour. **The aim was to provide the students and teachers with knowledge about the existence, causes and consequences of poverty around the world and in Croatia, as well as in their local community.** The project started in the academic year 2017/2018 with third and fourth grade students. The students that attended the elective classes of the Civic Education and the Debate Club and they were involved in the project for the whole second semester.

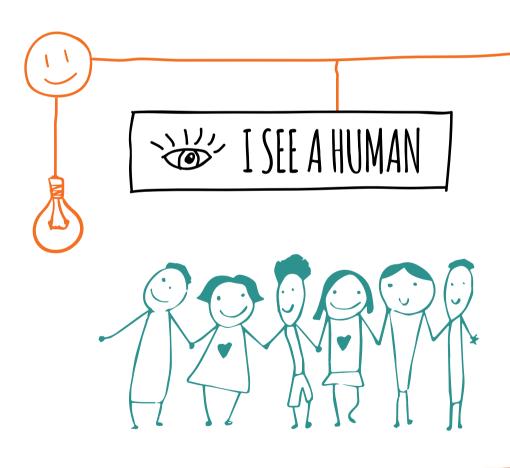
The students in groups did research on the concept of poverty and its various aspects. Afterwards each student group chose one topic out of many identified: the causes and outspread of poverty, economic migration, social mobility, poverty in Croatia and EU, the link between poverty and education, growing-up, health, violence, prostitution, social protection of the poor in Croatia, women, etc. They worked on the chosen topic and then presented their findings to other students. Third graders listened to the presentations of their peers in Sociology lectures, and the fourth graders in their Politics and Economics lectures. Their reactions were excellent as the presentations enabled the students to get involved and exchange their thinking and experiences related to these topics. Due to positive reactions and great interest of students, the project team is planning to continue with this project in the next academic year as well.

The students concluded that it is necessary to talk about this topic, and they dedicated one show of *Medionaut* to it. *Medionauts* are TV shows which students create in cooperation with the Film Factory in town of Pula, and the topics that they cover are civic, political and about media literacy. In that way, young people talk about the topics they see as important and are trying to encourage as many people as possible to think and activate themselves in regard to certain topics through local TV stations and YouTube channels.

If Medionauts still have not found a way to your TV screens, it is still not too late for you to see how it looks like when students take the microphone and the topics of civic education into their hands.

But also, another project is being planned by students. *Peer learning support* will be continuation of the project since the students became aware that students of a lower economic status cannot afford private tutoring, and they do not have an equal chance of correcting their grades as their peers with better economic status have. They also believe that they will get to know each other better and develop mutual understanding through peer learning support.

Despite the fact that the students in this school are involved in many extracurricular activities, the project team found a way of connecting the existing activities, electives and obligatory classes. Their goal is to continue to talk about topics recognized by the students as important, and which usually does not get enough attention due to the overloaded curriculum.





The small school with a big heart - Primary School Trpinja

33



Junior Volunteers

Responses gathered in the survey inspired the teachers to start new activities with aim to develop respect of students towards any differences, as well as to help students integrate themselves into the wider local community. The project *Junior Volunteers* was quickly brought to life with the goal of developing empathy, tolerance, humanity and multicultural respect among children by implementing different volunteering activities.

My Picture Book

Junior volunteers also got involved in the first graders' project My Picture Book. The aim of the project was to encourage students' commitment for reading and developing the love towards books, magazines, newspapers etc. Junior volunteers read fairy tales to kindergarten children, and discussed together about the relationship of good and evil which shows up in all fairy tales.

Walking the shelter dogs

The month of April was dedicated to collecting donations for shelter dogs. Students, parents and school staff responded really well to the activity. Firstly, the students visited the local veterinary practice and got familiar with its work and with dogs which were treated there at that time. They talked to the association's Rocco volunteers and members who help in taking care of the abandoned dogs. **One of the ways to help the dogs in shelter is to walk them, which helps them to stretch their paws while waiting for adoption.** After donating collected food and other supplies to the shelter, the students took several dogs saved from the streets for a walk. This was an amazing opportunity for the students to experience first-hand the joy and gratefulness of these dogs, and to become aware that dogs aren't toys, but living beings which need time and attention.

Small, and Still Big - Big, and Still Small

This school developed another project called Small, and Still Big – Big, and Still Small. As they explain it, the students were the "small" ones, while elderly in the local community were the "big" ones. The goal of this workshop was a non-formal gathering with an exchange of skills and knowledge. The elderly remembered their school days, and shared various anecdotes with students. They also showed students how to sew and introduced games from their youth. On the other hand, the students showed to



elderly how to use mobile phones, tablets and personal computers. Then the time came to play different board games: 'man, don't get angry', domino, chess and many other. Comments by the teacher tell us how much this gathering brought joy to both students and elderly: It wasn't visible who was "big", and who was "small" because of the playful smiles on the faces of our guests.

Peer learning support

Although peer support in studying is always welcome and developed in many schools; it is often mistakenly considered to be led only by excellent students. Primary School Trpinja was guided by the idea that every pupil can help younger students in studying. Thus, senior students with lower grades in Maths helped with the Math exercises to the youngest students in their primary school. Younger students received necessary help, and older students increased self-esteem and gained more motivation to study better.

Is there a better way of studying and correcting grades from this? Frequently given labels are also removed in this way – that someone is not good in a subject – which often demotivates students for further growth and progress.

These school's students and teachers recognized the needs in their school and local community, and they designed creative activities through which they give their contribution to raising awareness or solving a problem. **This school is an example how with small number of students big and valuable activities can be carried out, the essential thing is motivation that teachers can awaken and nurture in them.**







Peer studying support to which everyone is invited

Junior volunteers read fairy tales to their younger friends







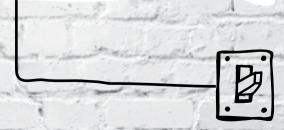
The Volunteer club everyone is talking about -Health and Veterinary School Pr. Andrija Stampar Vinkovci



Health and Veterinary School Dr. Andrija Štampar was founded in town of Vinkovci in 1991 – a school which educates students in the field of medicine and animal health. Except for excellent results and motivated teachers, this school has also recently become renowned for its volunteering club which became a source of quality social activities for the whole community.

There are 447 students enrolled in the school, many of whom travel every day to school from distant places, even from other counties. This is why, for them, finding time for extracurricular activities is a big challenge.

The process of planning the activities was started after conducting research to establish the students' attitudes towards acceptance and non-acceptance of mutual differences. The students named the following differences they notice among themselves: religion, socio-economic status, academic success and performance in extracurricular activities, sexual orientation, rural and urban differences and personal style.



1 Give You My Hand to Fly

With aim to create a feeling of togetherness and to encourage students to think about their own and other differences, the project team created the project *I Give You My Hand to Fly*. Within a very short period of time, a volunteering club with the same name came to life. This was encouraged due to enthusiasm, humanity, solidarity and initiative for support among the students.

Volunteering activities have been implemented intensively in cooperation with several local organizations. For example, the local Red Cross Vinkovci supported volunteers by providing transport for planning and implementing the volunteering activities. The school psychologist and project coordinator shared the secret to building a successful and committed team of young volunteers. She highlighted the **importance of good organising and detailed planning, identification of a set outcomes to be achieved through each activity, and effective support from other project leaders.**

Before starting volunteering, the project team organized several workshops for students. These workshops were identified as important step in preparation of students for volunteering. Therefore, students had an opportunity to learn about topics like motivation in volunteering, legal provisions in volunteering, volunteering with people with disabilities and even about rooming horses in the process of therapeutic horseback riding.

There were five groups of volunteers formed within the volunteering club. Each volunteering group was assigned a group leader who would contact and coordinate with other volunteering team leaders and with the volunteering club's coordinator.

Volunteering activities took place in various organizations that care for people in need. The students in **retirement home** read books to elderly and just enjoyed time having conversations about different topics. The students also volunteered in **children's centre** that cares for children without proper parental care and with history of abuse - students implemented different creative workshops to encourage their self-esteem, self-respect and positive self-image. In **the General Hospital**, **at the children's ward**, the students spent time with little patients talking and reading, but also running creative workshops, writing, and telling stories. The whole space at **the Rehabilitation centre Mala Terezija** was resonating with laughter during creative workshops of drawing, dancing, acting. The volunteers also read stories to the children at **the City library**, drew with them, and played various games. In **the Equestrian club Eohipus** activities included grooming the horses and helping people with disabilities during the therapeutic horseback riding.

One student who participated in these activities shared:

I don't remember having any conflict with anyone in this past period, but I know why I am like that. I discovered some virtues in myself that I didn't know I had before.

And after volunteering in the City library, I know that I'll be a kindergarten teacher.

The volunteering club coordinators stated that the academic success of volunteers have been improved, as well as relationships with their peers and teachers, the number of absent students also decreased, and communication skills improved.

People and children in need from all these organizations are looking forward to arrival of students, and some students who travel up to 50 kilometres to school every day, gladly stay after their school hours and adjust their other responsibilities so that they can volunteer. The students are inspired to give their time, knowledge and skills, to create new friendships and learn more about people from all walks of life. They understand that when they give their hand, as the name of the project states itself, somebody else also gives a hand to them, that everything that they give, they also receive equally.

Have you had a chance to observe your students helping their younger peers in studying or listening to stories of the elderly people who don't have anyone else to tell their stories to? Have you had a chance to see the expressions on their faces while they are becoming aware that so little is needed to make someone happy, listen to them, to understand them? In this way the students can truly learn what empathy is, what it means to be an active citizen and to contribute to positive changes in the society.



Activities with friends in the Rehabilitation centre Mala Terezija



Workshops in the children's centre



We want the Violence to stop here and now! - Nikola Tesla Technical School

Vukovar





Nikola Tesla Technical School in the town of Vukovar is located in the neighbourhood of Borovo, and attended by 406 students. The school delivers the school program in Serbian and Croatian language, and apart from the linguistic diversity, national and religious diversity is present as well. For that reason and because of the devastating history of town of Vukovar, it has always been important to talk about diversity and acceptance in this school. Students filled in a survey at the end of the last academic year in order to gather their opinions on the issue of discrimination in the local community. The responses gathered in the survey show that majority of students do not think that there is a problem of discrimination in the school. However, there are some students who have witnessed or have personally faced nationalistic, religious, linguistic, gender or social discrimination in local community. Students see one shift classes as an advantage, because it enables everyday interaction between different groups and as an opportunity to raise awareness of their similarities, not only their differences.

The school team engaged with the *Start the Change* project, because it focuses on respecting differences, creating new activities to continue educating the students about the importance of communication among different cultures and ethnic groups, and overcoming obstacles by mutual interaction, understanding, and support.



Together for a more tolerant and fair society

Bearing in mind the devastating recent history of the town of Vukovar, the school recognized the need to organize activities for students of different nationalities that would provide them with an opportunity to meet in the space outside of classrooms where they can get to know each other better. Within the project, the school organized many activities, but the one that they are very proud with is the Book club. The school's project coordinator started the **Book Club** in cooperation with the local creative writing centre. **The idea was to encourage students to**

read more and to get familiar with the writers from neighbouring countries: Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

They also hosted students from Islamic Grammar School from Zagreb and different writers from Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia.

Beside the Book Club, the project team started implementing two activities within a new project – Tesla's Europeans. The activities included starting up a school's volunteering club and also implementation of 10

a school's volunteering club and also implementation of 10 workshops with students about topics like peer violence, human rights and interculturalism, volunteering, and identity.

This school also created many other activities within the project. One of them is **The Pink T-shirts Day, the National Day of Fight against Peer Violence**. By wearing pink t-shirts on this day, students sent out a message of respect, understanding and empathy across to their peers and community, and they responded to violence by hugging in the photograph they promoted on the school's web site. The school director and pedagogue who held the workshops on the importance of

recognizing the violence also wore the pink T-shirts with the wish of sending the same message across.

Their message to the peers is clear: We want the violence to stop here and now!









The Book club





The volunteer IDs made by students



The abundance of creative work and outreach—
Grammar School

Zupanja



Gymnasium Županja is attended by 480 students. They are especially proud of the educational impact of curricular and extracurricular activities in the school, excellent results achieved at competitions in the school, county, and on national level, as well as of students passing the state graduation exam successfully, and their enrolment into higher education in Croatia and abroad.

Prior to joining the Start the Change project, the students expressed their understanding of the differences they encounter in the school environment. They especially pointed out the difficulties in communication among peers. The students are exposed to division and grouping and they experience reproach, isolation and condemnation due to misunderstanding and disapproval:

Conflicts emerge due to popularity which encourages grouping among the students. The students who have better material conditions for work should be more compassionate and thoughtful towards the other. Parental upbringing and support from the teachers are important factors in changing the habits of the society and eliminating the divisions.

The students mostly pointed out on existing divisions among peers on the basis of rural and urban location of living, their background and material possibilities.

1 am 1

The identified urban – rural divisions among students was tackled during the Croatian language classes. The city-village theme is a part of the study of realistic literary concept, so third-grade students talked about their living environment and experiential reality based on the given literary motifs with the emphasis on some of the harsh social mechanism which promotes material values only. The students named literary characters and analysed the socio-historical context of the 19th century, and thought about the contemporary social context. They gave examples related to the village-city and poverty-richness themes through a debate, which set the foundation for shaping the realistic literary characters. At the same time, they expressed their insights on the current social reality and difficulties which they encounter in their living and school environment. Watching movies, creating literary works, making posters, organizing debates, drama plays, and hosting radio shows, are all a part of the I am I project. Through those activities, the students directed the social awareness towards understanding, mutual communication, acceptance of different opinions, acceptance of diversity, humanity.

The leaders of the project team pointed out the students' dedication to the vision of the lam l project:

The students have expressed their thoughts and concluded that everyone is equally worth, and that everyone can contribute to the community they live in. The students also concluded that it is important to activate the good in every person, in order to accept the differences and create a more human and nobble society. Togetherness is the key guideline in developing awareness which includes diversity as desirable and acceptable.

By naming the project *I* am *I*, the students wanted to send out the vision of a more righteous and honest social reality which searches for an aware and active human being. In a humane and righteous living and working environment, the key is to develop the self-awareness of our own capabilities and influence, as well as to accept the shapes of the different, diverse and unaccepted in ourselves and others.



The students' video depicts a powerless individual under the wings of disapproval, ridicule and mockery



As an additional creative contribution to these important topics, the students filmed a video to participate in the Forum's creative contest *Paint the World*. During the preparations for this work, the students were reflecting on the individual's inability to live under the wings of disapproval, ridicule and mockery. For that reason, students expressed a symbolic representation of the students who agree to injustice, intolerance, enclosing and silence.



